



# THE TIMES

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New property and people tax planned for 1993 while commission looks at council reorganisation

## Death of poll tax announced by Heseltine

By ROBIN OAKLEY, POLITICAL EDITOR

THE death of the poll tax was finally announced yesterday. The Opposition described it as one of the most complete capitulations in modern political history.

In the understatement of the decade, Michael Heseltine told the Commons that the public had not been persuaded that the community charge was fair. It would therefore be replaced "from the earliest possible moment" by a new system of local taxation. In effect, the new property-plus-people tax is a modified version of the old rates.

The new tax will involve a single bill for each household based on two elements: the number of adults living there and the value of the property. But the government has not resolved what the balance will be between the two elements or whether properties will be assessed on capital or rental value. Those details are to be discussed in one of a series of consultative documents.

As leaked in advance, the environment secretary announced a commission to

Four pages of reports and analysis... 2, 3, 6, 7

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examine the scrapping of many county or district councils in favour of unitary authorities. But the government would not impose a uniform pattern of local authorities; communities would have a voice in what form of authority they got.

There will be another consultation paper on local government management because "too many councillors spend too much time achieving too little", and Mr Heseltine promised an extension of compulsory competitive tendering to housing, legal and computer services. The uniform business rate remains untouched.

In a separate statement, Kenneth Clarke, the education secretary, said that central government would take over responsibility for further education and sixth-form colleges. The Scottish and Welsh secretaries announced similar local taxes to that to be levied in England, and Ian Lang said the government wanted single-tier authorities throughout Scotland.

Mr Heseltine's statement, which followed the Budget announcement of a \$4.25 billion value-added tax increase to cut next year's poll tax bills by £140, generally pleased Conservative MPs, although they were anxious for more detail. Labour reactions were more mixed. On the one hand, they said it was a humiliating climbdown. On the other, they insisted that the poll tax lived on.

Bryan Gould, the party's environment spokesman, said: "We have just heard the most complete capitulation, the most startling U-turn and most shameful abandonment of consistency and principle in modern political history." But he added: "The poll tax bills

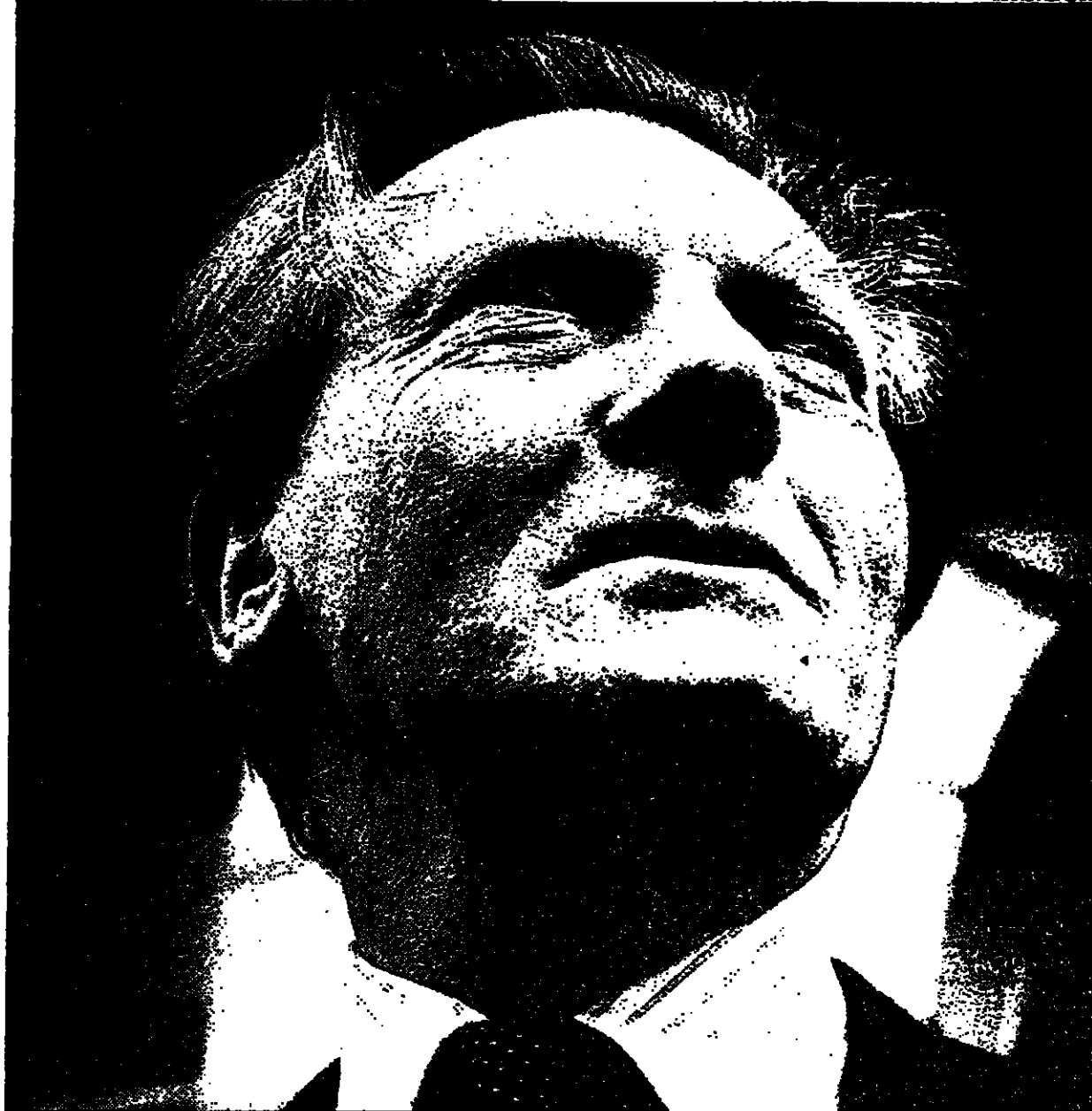
will keep on coming." Neil Kinnock last night tabled a motion of no confidence in the government that is expected to be debated next Wednesday.

Some division in the Tory ranks was exposed when Nicholas Ridley, who as environment secretary introduced the poll tax, said (inaccurately) that Mr Heseltine had chosen the idea of March to announce a tax that would be as hard to collect as the community charge, unrelated to ability to pay and which would create a new class of losers. Derek Conway said later that he would be resigning as parliamentary private secretary at the Welsh Office in protest at the abolition of the poll tax.

More details of the new tax are to be announced after Easter. But with consultations scheduled to continue into the summer, there will be nothing more than outline proposals for council candidates to put to the voters on May 2. Nor will there be any indication of who the winners and losers will be, even by a June general election, should there be one.

The environment secretary was joined by Labour MPs when he said: "We believe that bills should be spread widely and fairly throughout communities; that they should bear some relationship to people's ability to pay; and that it should be possible to levy and collect them without difficulty." In devising the

Continued on page 24, col 3



Michael Heseltine, poll tax slayer: "From the earliest possible moment the community charge will be replaced"

## The tax and what they said about it

Once implemented and through the transition, I believe the new system will prove enduring and a vast improvement on the status quo.

John Major, July 1988

As I have travelled the country over the last few months, I have found widespread acceptance of the principle of the community charge.

Chris Patten, April 1990

It will be seen to be a very much fairer and more acceptable system of paying towards the cost of local government than was the old rating system.

John Major, April 1990

We were bounced into it quickly because there was such a fuss about rates in Scotland. John Major, November 24 1990

The poll tax was a grave error of judgment... It is the one big mistake this government has made.

Nigel Lawson, November 1990

The principle of the poll tax still looks appalling.

Douglas Hurd, November 1990

I have always opposed the poll tax. It's a very unfair tax and a very costly tax to collect.

Edward Heath, February 1990

Community charge is a much fairer charge... and a far fairer charge than the alternative roof tax.

Margaret Thatcher, May 1990

The old rating system was as unfair as it was unpopular.

Geoffrey Howe, March 1990

The community charge is a courageous, fair and sensible solution. Far from being a vote loser, it will be a vote winner and launch us on a fourth term.

Michael Portillo, October 1990

"We have decided in principle to bring forward a new local tax under which there will be a single bill for each household comprising the number of adults living there and the value of the property."

Michael Heseltine: 1991

## Thatcher faithful defend her ideals

By ROBIN OAKLEY, POLITICAL EDITOR

CONSERVATIVE Way Forward, a pressure group formed by Tory MPs to keep alive the ideals of Margaret Thatcher, was launched yesterday amid protestations that it was not a divisive organisation and would be doing all it could to ensure the re-election of John Major's government.

The group's launching literature pointedly carried a quotation from Mrs Thatcher about her vision and the promise from Mr Major to build on her principles. But, until the group begins publishing its own new thinking, as it promises to do in a quarterly magazine called *Forward*, it will be suspected by the new Majorites of harking back to the days of Thatcherism and resenting any change.

Cecil Parkinson, former transport secretary and the group's first chairman, insisted that the organisation was in the mainstream of the party's thinking, begging the question of why they needed to establish a separate group. He said: "We don't see ourselves as the custodians of some sort of political museum, just there to make sure nothing changes in the future."

"We are, as a group, totally united behind John Major. We see our priority task for the immediate future in working in every way we can to make sure that he wins a fourth election for the Conservative party. That is our overwhelming interest."

Mr Parkinson said: "When you have a change of leader, people whose views have not been prevailing come out and start arguing the case that they should. We want to argue the case that the government's basic policies are absolutely right."

## Pressure grows for end to sanctions on Iraq

By MICHAEL KNIFE AND JAMES BONE

INTERNATIONAL pressure grew for sanctions against Iraq to be lifted or modified yesterday because of the desperate humanitarian plight of the Iraqi people and the threat of large-scale postwar loss of life.

China broke ranks with other permanent members of the United Nations Security Council to call for an early end to sanctions, and two leading British aid agencies urged that they be eased. Information gathered by the UN's under secretary general, Martti Ahtissari, on a recent mission to Iraq is said to be "dramatic".

A foreign ministry spokesman in Peking made the Chinese appeal after the five powers at the UN began negotiations on an American draft resolution which set conditions for the removal of most trade sanctions. "The Iraqi people are innocent," the spokesman said. "Having suffered the scourge of war, they are now faced with serious difficulties in their daily life. The international community should consider an earliest possible lifting of the economic sanctions against Iraq."

The American draft would lift sanctions on food immediately.



Ahtissari: "dramatic" information gathered

diately, but leave trade in other essential items at the discretion of the security council's sanctions committee. Sanctions on non-essential goods would be removed only when Iraq had complied with a series of rigorous conditions, such as destroying its weapons of mass destruction and agreeing to pay war compensation.

Britain and the United States want to maintain sanctions on non-essential goods as leverage to force Iraq to destroy its weapons of mass destruction and agree to set aside part of its oil revenue to pay war compensation.

The impending catastrophe facing the Iraqi people was spelled out by Oxfam and Save the Children officials on their return to London from a fact-finding mission to Baghdad. They said that Iraq's infrastructure has been almost totally paralysed and conditions would deteriorate disastrously as temperatures rose over the next few weeks to more than 40°C. The problem was particularly acute in Baghdad because it was a modern city of four million people with high-tech facilities that were now useless. Jim Howard, Oxfam's chief technical officer, said: "Most of the main infrastructure components were British designed and installed."

"What we are facing in Iraq is a public health crisis which may yet slide into a public health disaster," Martin Griffiths, a programme director for Save the Children, said. "The pinpoint accuracy of the allied bombing campaign may have resulted in fewer civilian deaths during the fighting, but its impact on the economic and social services infrastructure had been devastating."

"We are now in a race against time," Mr Griffiths said. "The combination of

higher temperatures and insanitary conditions mean that there is an increasing danger of diseases such as cholera, typhoid and hepatitis."

The directors of Oxfam and Save the Children have written to Javier Pérez de Cuellar, the UN secretary-general, saying that the mission's findings show that a situation of impending catastrophe exists in Iraq. They have called on the UN sanctions committee to authorise the urgent delivery of humanitarian aid.

Mr Griffiths emphasised that the agencies were calling for the easing, rather than the lifting, of sanctions.

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Conor Cruise O'Brien, page 16  
Leading article, page 17

## NEW WRITING IN THE TIMES

### INTERVIEW

Kate Millett talks to a man who, if reincarnated, wishes to be 'short fat and ugly'. Surely this can't be Cecil Parkinson? Page 20

### FOOTBALL

David Miller sees A.C. Milan's shameful walk-out on Wednesday as further proof of the sickness that pervades football. Page 46

### SOCIETY

Janet Daley says the continuing home ownership free ride reflects a culture favouring security over freedom. Page 16

### Leukaemia risk

Two studies have produced conflicting conclusions over fears that men exposed to radiation run a greater risk of fathering children who contract leukaemia. Analysis of cases round the nuclear plant at Dounreay, Orkney, established no link, but a second study in northern England had different results. Page 9

### BR warnings

New information screens will be installed on every station by 1993 as part of a two-point British Rail plan to warn commuters of bad weather conditions. Page 7

### Tibet hope

The Dalai Lama, on a visit to Britain, says he draws hope for Tibet from the upheavals and reforms which have occurred in other parts of the communist world. Page 15

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## Councils' grip on education loosened

By DAVID TYTLER, EDUCATION EDITOR

LOCAL education authorities will have an ever-diminishing role in education, says Kenneth Clarke, the education secretary. All colleges for post-16 education are to be given their independence and with an increasing number of schools opting out of local council control, many might find they were left without any secondary schools, he said last night.

Mr Clarke had earlier told the Commons that all further education colleges would be run by a national funding council from April 1993. He said he would expect all colleges and schools with sixth forms to compete for extra students. The change was simply the start of a wide-ranging review of local authority education services

which would radically alter as more schools chose to become grant-maintained, he said.

All these changes would reduce the role of education authorities, said Mr Clarke, although "somebody" would have to provide services for special schools, an inspection and advisory service, and run schools for those pupils who had failed to find a place in other schools in the area.

The transfer, which had been widely expected, was given a guarded welcome by principals and unions. A number of colleges had lobbied education ministers for the right to opt out of local

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Colleges' freedom, page 7  
Polytechnics brace, page 9  
Christian emphasis, page 24

## Two-faced upstart bowls cricket a googly

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

THANKS to a revolutionary bat which has already tweaked the whiskers of cricket's custodians at Lord's, the crack of willow on leather may resound a little less sweetly when the cricket season starts next month.

The new double-sided bat, a willow to make purists weep, is likely to be the most controversial innovation since the Australian Dennis Lillee walked out to face England at Perth in 1979 with an aluminium bat. The umpires on that occasion stopped its use after complaints by Mike Brearley, the England captain, that the ball was being damaged.

This time Lieutenant-Colonel John Stephenson, secretary of MCC, the game's spiritual guardian, is objecting on the grounds that the blade simply

is not cricket and may provoke a change in the laws. "It's a shame, but it looks as if we are going to have to tighten up the laws to stop this sort of thing happening," he said. "I'm sure we will see players turning up for first-class games with this bat this year. It is one of an increasing number of attempts to take advantage of the vagueness of the rule book. It may not break the rules but it does attack the spirit of the laws and the game itself."

Since Thomas "Shock" White turned up in 1771 for a game at Hambledon, the cradle of the game, with a bat the width of the stumps, the authorities, without determining the bat's shape, have stipulated that it should measure four-and-a-quarter inches in width.

The newcomer has two faces and is shaped a little like a slim club, with a wedge forming half-way between spine and toe on both sides to provide the "sweet" spot for the best-timed shots. Quite apart from its usefulness in facilitating the reverse sweep between slips and gully without the batsman having to turn the handle, it is said to wear twice as well as a normal bat and has been described as better for stroke-players.

After fashioning a prototype for the £15-million-a-year cricket-bat industry, John Newbery, the eminent craftsman in silver-leafed *salix alba caerulea* willow, died in 1989, leaving the game to deal with the googly he had bowled it. A much loved character, Newbery, aged 50, was a gifted amateur leg-break bowler with Lancashire but better known for following in

his father's footsteps as a maker of bats.

Tim Kecley, managing director of John Newbery Ltd, which supplies the bats to The Classic Bat Company of Bristol, said yesterday: "It doesn't quite have the meat you get from the ridge profile of a normal bat, but it performs very well. There are certainly no rules against it. These are early days yet to see how well it's going to perform."

The bat has been given the seal of approval by Julian Wyatt, former county batsman and assistant coach of Somerset. He said: "I think it's a great idea. I wouldn't hesitate to let our county side use it during matches. The fact that it has two faces means double the life of a normal bat, which has only one face to wear out."

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# It's one out, all in as Heseltine keeps the country guessing

MICHAEL Heseltine has at last ruled something out. Although there is to be a period of consultation about the draft of proposals outlined in parliament yesterday, the community charge is to go.

Little has been ruled in. The environment secretary has outlined possible reforms which will affect the finance, functions and structure of British local government. The finance reforms outlined would replace the community charge in 1993 with a new local tax. This new tax will continue to raise the relatively small proportion of local income which will be the inevitable result of Norman Lamont's £4.5 billion

infusion of government grant to local government. Mr Heseltine managed, without irony, to claim credit for reducing the burden of local domestic taxation which, in the early 1980s, he had himself pushed up by cutting the rate support grant.

Mr Heseltine's new tax will be based on property values and adult numbers. He did not rule out the continued need for a register, so an add-on mini poll tax must still be a possibility. The precise method of assessing property values has yet to be determined. So we may yet see a tax based on capital values, rental values, "bands" of value, or some other basis. The structural re-

The only concrete news to come from Michael Heseltine yesterday was that the poll tax is dead. But, according to Tony Travers, what he has in store for Britain is now open to conjecture

forms outlined would allow people to lobby a new local government commission to get rid of at least one tier of their local government. This new group of the great and the good will receive representations from people about the size and shape of local government.

Such a proposal is some way from allowing local people to

decide for themselves — possibly by referendum — what system of local government they want. But it does offer the chance to break away from the uniformity of present arrangements. The more radical such a commission turned out to be, the more likely it would be to galvanise civic identity.

Finally, changes in local authority functions will lead to the

transfer of further education and sixth forms from council control. It is not entirely clear how far it is desirable or administratively possible to cut off education for young adults from that for older children. Moreover, there have long been good arguments for allowing local people to have a say in how colleges are run.

Adding the proposals together and enacting the lot could lead to a reform of local government in Britain far greater than anything previously attempted. Critics of government have in the past argued that successive governments have always examined finance, structure and functions separately. No one could argue

this of the review revealed yesterday. But the results of the review are a long way from what diehard localists would want.

Local government is a bulwark of Britain's unwritten constitution. By reducing the level of local taxation to only 15 or 20 per cent of income, removing part of education and by permitting the removal of powerful county councils, it would be hard to see this package, if enacted, doing much other than weakening Britain's only elected authorities other than Westminster.

On the brighter side for local democracy is the fact that decisions about county or district abolition will allow some local

input into those decisions. Giving influence over local government structure to the electorate could be a step towards "bottom up" democracy and away from the implementation of a uniform system from Westminster.

What did not feature in the review? Mayors were given a miss, as was the possible transfer of police and fire services to central control. Kenneth Clarke did not, however, rule out mass opt-out of schools from local government in the longer term.

Tony Travers is director of research, Greater London Group, London School of Economics and Political Science

## Tories sink flagship but salvage support of backbench rebels

By NICHOLAS WOOD, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

MICHAEL Heseltine appeared last night to have averted the threat of a serious backbench Conservative revolt over the government's plan to replace the poll tax with a "local tax" levied on property and people.

Most right-wing supporters of the community charge said the environment secretary had salvaged enough from its wreckage to win their support for his new approach. Notable rebels such as Michael Mates, who cut the government's majority to 25 three years ago with his attempt to hand the charge, were delighted with Mr Heseltine's statement.

Mr Mates said: "I am very pleased. I thought the community charge without any ability-to-pay element was fatally flawed because it would not be seen as fair. The new proposals reflect this and will be seen as fair. The government is at the end of a long nightmare."

John Biffen, another opponent, said: "When a flagship becomes a navigation hazard, the best thing is to scuttle it. May I congratulate Mr Heseltine on the way he has set about the job."

Nicholas Ridley and Sir Rhodes Boyson, two former environment ministers and defenders of the principle of a flat-rate tax, appeared to be in

a minority with their criticisms of the hazy formula outlined in the Commons. As one minister, a member of the Thatcherite No Turning Back Group (NTBG), remarked, it was noticeable that no one from the group came to Mr Ridley's support when he publicly linked Mr Heseltine's repudiation of the poll tax with his central part in Margaret Thatcher's downfall.

Mr Ridley said that Mr Heseltine's two-tax alternative would be just as hard to collect as the poll tax, would not be related to ability to pay and would create a new class of losers. However it was his reminder of the bitterness of the leadership election, when he stretched a point to say the environment secretary was making his statement during the 1987 election (March 15), that stung most backbenchers.

Tony Banks, the Labour MP for Newham North West, said it was the first time he could recall a Brutus stabbing a Judas in the back. Michael Latham, MP for Rutland and Melton and a critic of the poll tax, said if historical allusions were required, he preferred the Earl of Essex's remark in 1641: "Stone dead hath no fellow."

Outside the chamber, the minister belonging to the NTBG said Mr Ridley and Sir Rhodes were "members of the

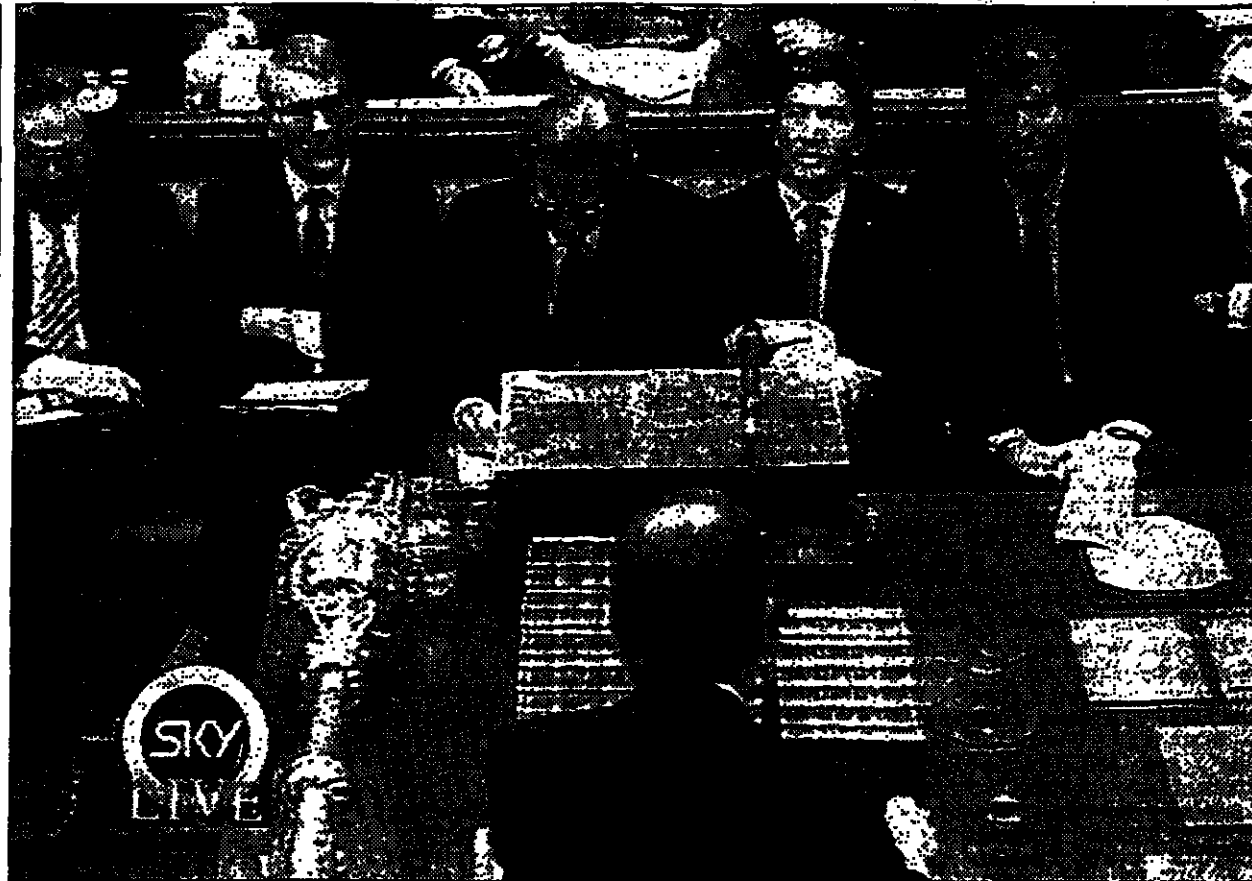
old guard". By retaining something of the principle that all should pay something towards local services and by "not rubbing Thatcherite noses in it", Mr Heseltine had neutralised the issue as a prime source of internal party conflict, he concluded. He predicted that there would be few if any ministerial resignations.

Others on the right asserted that the indistinct nature of the new system of financing local government left open the possibility that the poll tax might yet survive. One right-wing backbencher said that with bills being cut by £140 a head, the community charge could come to seem tolerable in the two years before it was due to be abolished.

Sir Rhodes, who has campaigned for the poll tax to be kept at half its present level of £400 a person, was the only backbencher immediately to declare that he would vote against the new package when it was brought before the Commons.

Mr Heseltine still has to satisfy some mainstream MPs, particularly those representing southern seats, that his hint of taxes based on capital values will not mean big bills for middle class Tory voters.

Philip Howard, page 16  
Leaving article, page 17



Brave front: Bryan Gould, Labour's environment spokesman, facing up to John MacGregor, left, John Major, Michael Heseltine, Michael Portillo, Robert Key and Norman Lamont on the Tory front bench yesterday

### SCOTLAND

## 'Guinea pigs' lament delay before tax goes

THE proposals to replace the poll tax were received with little enthusiasm in Scotland where Roy McIver, general secretary of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, described the new tax as a

botch-up and half-baked (Kerry Gill writes).

He said: "We welcome the fact that they have accepted the poll tax is impossible to work. Anything that takes us away from that is to be welcomed to some degree."

The problem was the wait of two or three years to get rid of the tax, which was introduced a year earlier in Scotland, leading to accusations that the Scots were being used as guinea pigs. "It would be necessary and possible to put back domestic rating within 12 months," he said. "That won't be possible under this half-baked proposal."

Donald Dewar, Labour's Scottish affairs spokesman, labelled the proposals a "dog's breakfast". He said: "Clearly the government is in a panic stricken and has thrown together a remarkably ill-digested and ill-thought out package. They have now admitted that Labour was right all along."

Dick Douglas, one of the Scottish National Party MPs who has refused to pay the tax, said: "It is a victory for people taking a principled stand for people who couldn't pay."

### OPPOSITION

## No confidence vote may unite Tories

By SHEILA GUNN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR tabled a motion of no confidence in the government last night alleging a £14.3 billion blunder by ministers in introducing the short-lived poll tax. It is likely to be debated next Wednesday.

Neil Kinnock, the Labour leader, announced the decision in the Commons after Michael Heseltine, the environment secretary, disclosed the abolition of the poll tax. The motion reads: "This House has no confidence in Her Majesty's government in

the light of its inability to rectify the damage done to the British people by the poll tax."

The Labour leadership is alleging that the twin elements of the new tax resulted from Mr Heseltine's determination to return to a property tax while Ian Lang, the Scottish secretary, and Michael Portillo, the local government minister, remain wedded to the community charge.

No confidence debates tend to unite MPs behind their prime minister. Rarely called, they require the Commons' business managers to arrange a full day's debate at short notice. The last one, last November, provoked Margaret Thatcher's bravura performance in the Commons after she had announced her resignation.

Alan Beith, the Liberal Democrat MP, said yesterday: "Once again Neil Kinnock has rushed in to rescue the Government with a no-confidence motion — the only thing that can unite Conservatives who are deeply divided about Mr Heseltine's new tax. Will he never learn?"



Beith: "Will Kinnock never learn?"

## How poll tax opponent's aims became victims of his review

By MARY ANN SIBGHART

WHEN Michael Heseltine walked into the Department of the Environment in November with a brief to sort out the poll tax, he already had a blueprint for reform in mind. He had set out his views on local government and how to pay for it in speeches and newspaper articles. How much of the original vision has survived?

In his 1987 book, *Where There's a Will*, a mixture of political memoir and personal manifesto, Mr Heseltine dealt more with the poor record of local government than with suggestions for improvement.

It was in an article in *The Times* in May 1990 that Mr Heseltine first enumerated his plans for an alternative to the poll tax, saying there was "a belief that it [poll tax] is either too high, unfair, or both, and it has created a lingering sense of injustice."

Mr Heseltine proposed five changes:

- single-tier county boroughs for major urban areas;
- paid, directly-elected mayors;
- tougher value-for-money audits;
- compulsory local elections for the whole council if a proposed budget were

much more than the government deemed necessary; □ the possibility of high-charging councils having to pay the Treasury a surcharge.

Of these proposals, only the first appeared in yesterday's statement. Mr Heseltine said that he intended to set up a local government commission that would introduce more unitary authorities. Directly-elected mayors and audits were not mentioned, although they could form part of his consultative paper on the workings of local authorities.

However, the biggest victims of the poll tax review have been Mr Heseltine's ideas for control of council spending. In his *Times* article, he opposed capping. In order to end up with only a few capped councils, he said, the government had to set a figure well above the average. That gave other councils a licence to spend up to the limit. Worst of all, an effective capping system "would negate accountability and be an act of centralised political power outside of experience."

Yet last week, the environment secretary named 17 councils that he was minded

to cap this financial year, and yesterday he was forced to assert that he was prepared to use capping "rigorously" again in 1991-2.

In the *Times* article, he wrote that "only one factor consistently presses down on local government expenditure: the fear of electoral defeat". In effect, a referendum on the budget should be held in any year in which proposed spending went above the central government limit. This would "impose a powerful financial discipline because few councillors would want to risk it".

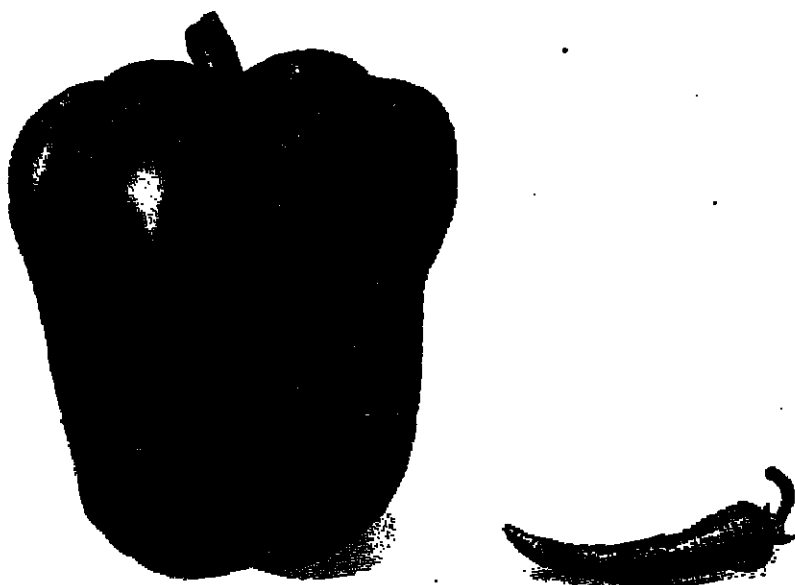
The proposal seems to have been killed by the Treasury; elections are expensive.

The article also criticised the ideal of transferring funding of some services from local to central government, saying that councils would merely seek new spending opportunities.

Yet on Tuesday the Budget switched £4.25 billion of funding from local to central government. For this year, local spending can be controlled, since budgets have already been set. Future years may require tough capping, which, in Mr Heseltine's own words, negates accountability.

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Choice of destination. (Please indicate 3 choices of destination from the list below and your preferred length of stay.)  
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# 'Sterile quarrel is brought to an end'

MICHAEL Heseltine, environment secretary, said in his statement yesterday on the local government review.

The House will remember that when I announced the review on December 5 I explained the comprehensive nature of our review. For the first time we are looking at the structure, functions and finance of local government in the round.

I should like to thank the very large number of people and organisations who have put forward their views. I do not need to tell the House that they have not always been compatible with one another.

We took as our starting point our firm belief that the local delivery of certain services — many of them essential — is a central feature of a pluralist society. Local government must enable local people to exercise continuing influence over the quality and the range of the services which Parliament entrusts to them.

## STRUCTURE

### Councils not independent

Local government is responsible for the efficient delivery of these services. We need responsible elected local authorities not only to provide a check and a balance to Westminster but also to reflect the multiplicity of aspirations among local communities.

But, given the primary responsibilities of central government, local government cannot be a fully independent power in the land. It traditionally derives its power from Parliament, and it must complement and not compete with central government in its activities.

Within this framework, we believe that councils should be accountable for their actions and that there should be a direct and visible relationship between the costs of services and the local bills to which they give rise. We believe that those bills should be spread widely and fairly throughout communities; that they should bear some relation to people's ability to pay; and that it should be possible to levy and collect them without difficulty.

These principles are guiding our review. I am able to announce today some interim conclusions and in other areas to narrow the options so as to proceed to more detailed consultations.

## MANAGEMENT

### 'Enabling' role vital

Many parts of England now have in effect binary local government. The GLC and the metropolitan county councils were abolished in 1986. The idea went in 1990. There is little demand for their restoration. Indeed it is difficult now to perceive any real role that they played.

But outside the main conurbations, leaving aside the valuable role played by parishes, the system of two principal authorities in each area still prevails. The usefulness of two tiers is being questioned. Also being questioned is the continued existence of certain of those

authorities which were created by the local government reorganisation of 1974 but which have not succeeded in inspiring local loyalty. Another challenge is the role of authorities which are changing as they increasingly become enablers rather than direct providers of services.

There is therefore now an opportunity to think afresh about the structure of local authorities. But the government does not see this as an opportunity to impose a new pattern of local authorities according to a national prescription. Nor do we believe that it is necessary to have a uniform pattern of authorities in every part of the country.

Local people should have an important role in determining what structure of local government best reflects their community loyalties. This does not mean therefore the wholesale abolition of either county councils or district councils, nor even of unitary authorities everywhere. It means arriving at the right solution for each community. We intend to adopt a practical approach in response to local views and local conditions. But it seems likely that we shall move to a larger number of unitary authorities.

We shall therefore be consulting on the proposition that a local government commission should be charged with responsibility for evaluating the most appropriate form of local government for individual areas, taking account of the wishes of local people and putting forward proposals for reform. They will proceed area by area.

The reduction in the local tax burden and correspondingly larger contribution from central taxation announced in the Budget statement implies a need to consider whether a number of functions should now be brought into or financed directly by central government. This would be without further changes to the balance between central and local government.

The secretary of state for education is bringing forward today proposals for such a transfer in one area of his responsibility.

## FINANCE

### Cumbersome committees

The issue of how local authorities are managed is no less crucial. The problems which local authorities face are compounded by the cumbersome internal arrangements for the management of councils. The committee system — which dates back to the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 — requires that all the decisions are taken collectively by large numbers of councillors, in full council or committee. Too many councillors spend too much time achieving too little.

Consequently it is difficult for local government to attract and keep enough men and women of the right calibre both to lead what are now multi-million-pound organisations providing a range of key services, and to represent properly the interests of the people who elected them.

We therefore believe that there should be a new look at the internal workings of local authorities to improve the decision-making process. I shall issue a consultation paper on these issues.

Alongside that, we also want to develop further the idea of the enabling council. Many of the government's policies have been designed to move power to individual members of the community, in particular the right to buy, the tenants' charter and local management of schools.

Compulsory competitive tendering has also been part of this process and we will be looking at ways to make it more effective and to carry it forward. In particular, we will be looking at new areas where contracting out should be applied. These will include professional and technical tasks as well as manual tasks. Housing management, legal services and computer services could all be added to the list.

The success of a local authority must be measured not by its size but by the quality of the services delivered, from whatever sources, by its responsiveness to its clients and customers, and by the value it squeezes out of each pound of taxpayers' money.

## FINANCE

### Speed must be priority

I now turn to the question of finance. A local tax base is essential if there is to be any meaning to the concept of local government. But local government services cost a great deal of money — more than £30 billion in the coming year — and the burden on local taxpayers has become too great.

We have therefore decided to make a fundamental shift in the amounts which central and local taxpayers pay towards the cost of local government services. This change will take effect in 1991-2, and will reduce local taxation to a level that should be sustainable in the longer term.

The first consequence of this was announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on Tuesday. We have concluded that it is right to reduce the present average headline community charge of £392 in England for 1991-2 by £140 to £252. The average amount payable by chargepayers, after allowing for the community charge reduction scheme and benefits, will then be considerably less than this. To secure this (the Chancellor) is providing a further £4.25 billion from national taxation to local authorities.

As a result, in 1991-2 the community charge will be rising less than rates in their last full year. For the coming year locally raised finance will fund 22 per cent of local government expenditure, compared to 34 per cent this year. And these figures are before the substantial benefit of rebates and the community charge reduction scheme.

To achieve these objectives the secretaries of state for Scotland and Wales and I are today introducing in the House a short bill. If enacted, this will have broadly three effects.

First, it will provide that the community charges which authorities have set for 1991-2 are replaced the day after the bill's enactment by new charges £140 lower. Councils will not need to meet to set the new charges, but they will be treated in all respects as if they were set by authorities in the usual way.

Second, my right honourable friends and I will be empowered to pay grants to charging

authorities to make up the loss of income resulting from the reduction in charges brought about by the bill's provisions. It is also our intention to pay grant to cover authorities' additional administrative expenses arising as a consequence of the bill.

All this means that where authorities have already issued their charge bills for 1991-2 — and I know that some authorities have done so — they will, after the bill's enactment, need to issue fresh bills reflecting their new lower charges. We propose to amend the regulations on the community charge demand notice slightly to provide the basis for the new bills, but we believe not in ways that would result in significant changes to authorities' computing arrangements.

We are revising the profile of payments from the non-domestic rates pool to ensure that our proposals have no significant effect on authorities' cash flow. These proposals do not affect the operation of the community charge reduction scheme or community charge benefits, though it will of course be necessary to recalculate entitlements under both schemes.

My department has written to local authorities, and to the local authority associations, explaining the details of all these arrangements. Clearly it is desirable that the new charges should be in place at the earliest opportunity. Accordingly, we shall be looking to Parliament to consider the bill as a matter of urgency.

Having reduced community charges to reasonable levels, we will expect local authorities to remain at those levels. I shall therefore be prepared to use my capping powers rigorously again in 1992-3.

## FINANCE

### Local tax is essential

Having achieved a reasonable balance between funding from national sources and funding from local tax we need to address the question of the local tax itself. I referred briefly in my opening remarks to the principles which I believe should underpin any form of local tax. Let me spell them out.

First, accountability. As far as possible, a local tax should buttress the accountability of a local council to its taxpayers. People should be able to see some link between what they are being asked to pay and what their council is spending.

Second, fairness. Nobody likes paying taxes. But in our society taxes have to be basically acceptable to taxpayers, and to achieve that they must be perceived to be fair.

Third, ease of collection. Any tax will require administrative arrangements to collect the revenue, including measures to chase up those who are late in paying. But if the tax is too difficult to collect the costs of collection become unacceptable.

Fourth, most people should make some contribution. We believe it is right that, as far as possible, any tax should take some account of the number of adults in each household, so that they contribute to the cost of services provided by the local councils which they elect. This principle has gained a wide measure of acceptance.



Gould: flagship is still a danger to all shipping

Fifth, restraint. No tax is acceptable if it is levied at penal rates either as a result of local authority overspending or because the burden on any individual or household is excessively high. We are adamantly opposed to excessively high bills for a minority of electors — a feature of the old rates system.

In accordance with these criteria we have reached our conclusions about the future of the community charge. In spite of the comprehensive system of income related rebates, and the reduction scheme we devised the public have not been persuaded that the charge is fair.

We have therefore decided that from the earliest possible moment the community charge will be replaced by a new system of local taxation. After a careful reappraisal of the options we have decided in principle to bring forward a new local tax

under which there will be a single bill for each household comprising two essential elements, the number of the adults living there and the value of the property. There are a number of ways of assessing values, on a capital or a rental basis, which require careful evaluation and extensive discussion and consultation. But it is our intention that the system we introduce should have the following features:

- It should reflect people's concern that the system is fair;
- The balance of funding as between central taxes and the new local tax should be broadly in line with that announced by my Chancellor the Exchequer on Tuesday;
- It will be essential to ensure that local taxpayers do not face undue changes in their bills as a result of the introduction of the new local tax arrangements. There will therefore need to be arrangements to protect them during the transition to the new system;
- It should ensure that regional variations in property values do not lead to disproportionate bills in high price areas;
- There should be rebate arrangements to protect people on low incomes from making a disproportionate contribution to local taxation;
- There must also be restraints to ensure that local taxpayers do not face excessive bills as a result of overspending by local councils, either before or after introduction of the new system. There are a number of ways, including capping, by which this may be achieved.

## Protection 'our duty'

Mr Speaker, I made clear at the beginning of this statement my commitment to the institution of local government. But I must also say that we must recognise economic reality and the duty and responsibility of central government to manage the economy. Central govern-

ment also has a duty to protect local taxpayers from excessive bills.

I intend to publish a consultative document after the Easter recess setting out alternative approaches and dealing with these issues. The government have recently introduced a proposal to change the uniform business rate.

The secretaries of state for Scotland and Wales will be making separate statements about the outcome of the review as it relates to those countries.

## Confidence is restored

Let me summarise, Mr Speaker. We have already dealt with the burden of the local tax. I shall shortly publish consultation papers on structure, internal management and the new local tax. We will conclude the period of consultation in the summer. During the first of the new authorities could be in place by April 1994. We shall consult local authorities on the basis that the new tax could be in place in 1993-4.

We believe that the proposals which I have outlined today will establish a system of local government which will carry through into the next century. These proposals are designed to end the sterile quarrel between supporters of central and local government. They should attract men and women of sufficient quality and commitment to restore authority and confidence in local government. They should enhance the quality of services and give extra momentum to the pursuit of value for money. They should result in a local government which puts people first.

I commend these proposals to the House.

# Tories too weak and divided to correct their error, Gould says

MICHAEL Heseltine's announcement was greeted by Labour in the Commons as a "complete capitulation, the most startling U-turn and the most shameless abandonment of consistency and principle in modern political history".

Bryan Gould, shadow environment spokesman, noted to the relief of his own supporters that Margaret Thatcher, the former prime minister, "could not bear to be present". While she had been famously not for turning, Mr Heseltine and John Major had not only turned, he said, they had been turned, a revolving door.

But the viability of poll tax was defended by Nicholas Ridley, who as environment secretary steered it through the Commons. The new tax, he said, would create a new class of losers.

In a speech punctuated by cheers and laughter from the Labour benches, Mr Gould said

that on the evidence of this "broken-backed and blood stained" announcement the government was too weak and divided to correct its own error.

He said that it was astonishing incompetence that after 12 years and £13.5 billion of taxpayers' money Mr Heseltine had still not been able to say what he intended. "What happened to the prime minister's assurance of Tuesday that we should have all the answers this week," he asked. "How could a prime minister on top of his job make promises on Tuesday which his secretary of state is unable to fulfil on Thursday?"

Mr Gould predicted that poll tax bills would keep coming, perhaps until 1994, and he characterised the wreck of the flagship as "still afloat and a danger to all shipping". Questioning support for Mr Heseltine's plans among Tory MPs, he asked if he recalled Mrs Thatcher assuring the country

that she would never introduce a property tax.

The whole of the Conservative party had fought the last election on a manifesto commitment to abandon property taxes. Were they now to be whipped through the lobbies? Mr Gould said that the poll tax was spreading its malign influence not just through education and the Budget strategy but now into the whole structure of local government as well.

Despite Mr Heseltine's belated confession of error, he was still in thrall to the tax. "There is some justice in the spectacle of this government continuing to pay a heavy price for its poll tax debacle. The tragedy is that the rest of the country will also continue to pay that price — the price of a mistake borne of arrogance and perpetuated by a leaking and limping government."

The anxiety of Conservative MPs in the South about the problems of higher property values there was expressed by Robert Dunn (Dartford), who asked for an indication of the nature of proposed equalisation arrangements.

Mr Heseltine said the problem would be addressed in the consultative document and could not be stated in general terms, but added that he had seen "remarkable figures as a consequence of our proposals for people living in the South-east and they bear no relation to reality".

Alan Beith, Liberal Democrat spokesman on Treasury affairs, objected that the proposals would move from the most unpopular to the second most unpopular local tax and would not be based on ability to pay, a clear characteristic of local income tax, the Liberal Democrat proposal. "Why not accept our whole package?"

Mr Heseltine, accompanied by Labour jeers, recalled his talks on the tax with Mr Beith and said that the Liberal Democrat attitude was in marked contrast to the irresponsible position of the official Opposition. There were various reasons why, could not accept all the Liberal Democrat plans.

One was that the mood of the country was not inclined to entrust income tax rates to Labour local authorities. "Having listened carefully and courteously, I am persuaded by his arguments, not to follow them, but to reject them."

Nicholas Ridley suggested that if such a huge sum of money as the Chancellor had made available on Tuesday were put to a rebate system, community charge might become "rather acceptable in two years' time".

He suggested that the new tax would be just as hard to collect as the present one, would not be well related to ability to pay and would create a new class of losers, but concluded that this might be because Mr Heseltine had chosen to make his statement on the 15th of March (the 15th is actually on March 15).

Mr Heseltine retorted that nobody would suggest that Mr Ridley had a lean and hungry look but he was glad that Mr Ridley had welcomed the early part of his statement. Making more and more payments, as Mr Ridley had suggested, was no basis on which to sustain a tax

government altogether rather than just one or the other as had been done in the past.

Ron Leighton (Newham, NE, Lab) accused the government of cutting back support for local government and then hoping that local councils would be blamed for cuts in services. The people, he said, had been too intelligent to fall for that. Now there was the sound of panic as rats deserted the sinking flagship.

Michael Mates (East Hampshire, C) said that Tory MPs had spoken to believed that they were the only ones behind Mr Heseltine's proposals. "Which time have been fully discussed and agreed within a united government and a united cabinet".

Dave Nellist, Labour MP for Coventry South East and a non-payer of the community charge, called for the threat of prosecution to be lifted from those refusing to pay and for compensation to be given to those people who had gone into debt in order to pay.

Mr Heseltine told him that the law was the law and the bills had to be paid.

# Britain's New Air Traffic Control Centre Gets off the Ground

Lord Brabazon, Minister for Aviation, today inaugurates building work on the Civil Aviation Authority's new air traffic control centre.

The £200 million plus centre is being built on a former industrial site near Fareham in Hampshire to help meet the needs of the next generation of air travellers.

The new centre will become operational in 1996. Then, using the latest systems and the proven skills of our air traffic controllers and engineers, it will enable us to handle at least 40 per cent more flights over England and Wales.

This is just part of the Civil Aviation Authority's £750 million investment in air traffic control facilities to meet the expected growth in demand for air travel.



CAA House 45-49 Kingsway London WC2B 6TE



Ridley: tax will bring new class of losers

Clarke to give post-16 colleges freedom

Clarke to give post-16 colleges freedom

Clarke to give post-16 colleges freedom

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# Labour calls for action as BAE cuts 4,700 more jobs

By TIM JONES, EMPLOYMENT CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH Aerospace said yesterday that it is to cut 4,700 jobs as part of restructuring to meet a much harsher business environment. The announcement, soon after the decision by VSEL, the warship makers, to cut thousands of jobs, means that this week alone more than 10,000 jobs, most of them related to the defence industry, are to go. When dependent sub-contractors are included, the figure is nearer 15,000.

BAe has already announced that it is cutting up to 5,000 jobs at its Preston and Kingston upon Thames factories. Yesterday's announcement

led to calls from Labour and union leaders for government intervention in what they say is a crisis in crucial areas of the manufacturing base.

Gordon Brown, Labour's trade and industry spokesman, said: "Britain has now lost more than 12,000 jobs in just two days since the Budget. Mr Lamont claimed would be a Budget for business."

Doug Henderson, another of the party's trade and industry spokesmen, said: "Whole sections of our manufacturing industry are being wiped out" with skills and manufacturing capacity lost to the nation in what has been

one of Britain's best export-earning industries.

The BAE decision will mean a reduction in the commercial aircraft section from 26,500 to 24,000 and in the defence-oriented dynamics division from 9,100 to 6,900. The company blamed four factors for the downturn in its commercial aircraft division: the recession, which meant that airlines were not ordering new planes; the Gulf war, which had curtailed travel; the strength of the dollar against the pound; and competition from American competitors.

The main effect on the commercial aircraft operation will be at Hatfield, Hertfordshire, where 1,470 jobs will be lost. In the missile and weapons division, most of the jobs losses will be at the Bristol plant, where staffing will be reduced by 1,300 to 800.

Bill Jordan, president of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, the biggest in the plants, said: "This is another tragic example of the problems a neutral Budget never addressed. The government can no longer afford to be neutral over drastic job losses. They must act decisively to cut interest rates to stem the tide of the destruction of precious skills."

● Hawker Siddeley, the UK engineering group which cut 4,000 jobs in 1990, expects to make another 4,000 employees redundant this year (Martin Barrow writes).

A total of 1,600 redundancies at British sites have been announced so far this year, although some of the new losses will take place in overseas operations.

● More than 500 jobs are to be lost at Rolls-Royce plants in East Kilbride and Hillington, Glasgow, because of the drop in worldwide airline travel (Kerry Gill writes). Most of the losses will be by voluntary redundancy.

● Nearly 600 jobs are likely to be lost at Manchester airport after the announcement yesterday by the Civil Aviation Authority that it wanted to end the airport's baggage handling monopoly.

Letters, page 17  
Details, page 25

## MPs urge review of navy

By SHEILA GUNN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Commons defence committee demanded yesterday a post-Gulf review of Britain's future naval strength, saying that the Treasury had dictated the government's programme of cuts without regard to military needs.

The MPs said that the defence ministry had bypassed Nato when deciding to leave Britain with a fleet of about 40 ships, in spite of ministerial assurances that a peace dividend, following the end of the Cold War, would not be pursued unilaterally. Parliament should also be told which peacetime tasks would be abandoned as a result of the cuts, they said.

The report, underlining the committee's anger at the min-

istry's handling of the "Options for Change" programme, concluded: "It must be right to 'size' the Royal Navy in relation to its foreseeable wartime tasks, and then allocate peacetime tasks with whatever force levels result. What cannot be right is to make an arbitrary reduction in the size of the Royal Navy surface fleet, and then allocate wartime tasks to that fleet."

Even worse, it said, would be for the Treasury to dictate the size of the surface fleet in the course of public expenditure negotiations. "Nothing we have heard in evidence, however ingenious, has dispelled our impression that this is a reasonable description of the methods used. We await

with some concern a more convincing explanation of the thinking behind the government's proposals."

The committee warned the ministry that "we have been here before", with similar cuts planned ten years ago. Those were followed by the Falklands conflict. "It is essential that, once again, ministers review their proposals in the cold light of experience and inform the House, as they did in 1982, where they have found their original proposals to be in need of revision."

The committee has also begun an enquiry into the future of the submarine fleet, which the defence ministry is planning to reduce to about 16 vessels.

## £2.5m to be spent on York city walls

By PETER DAVENPORT

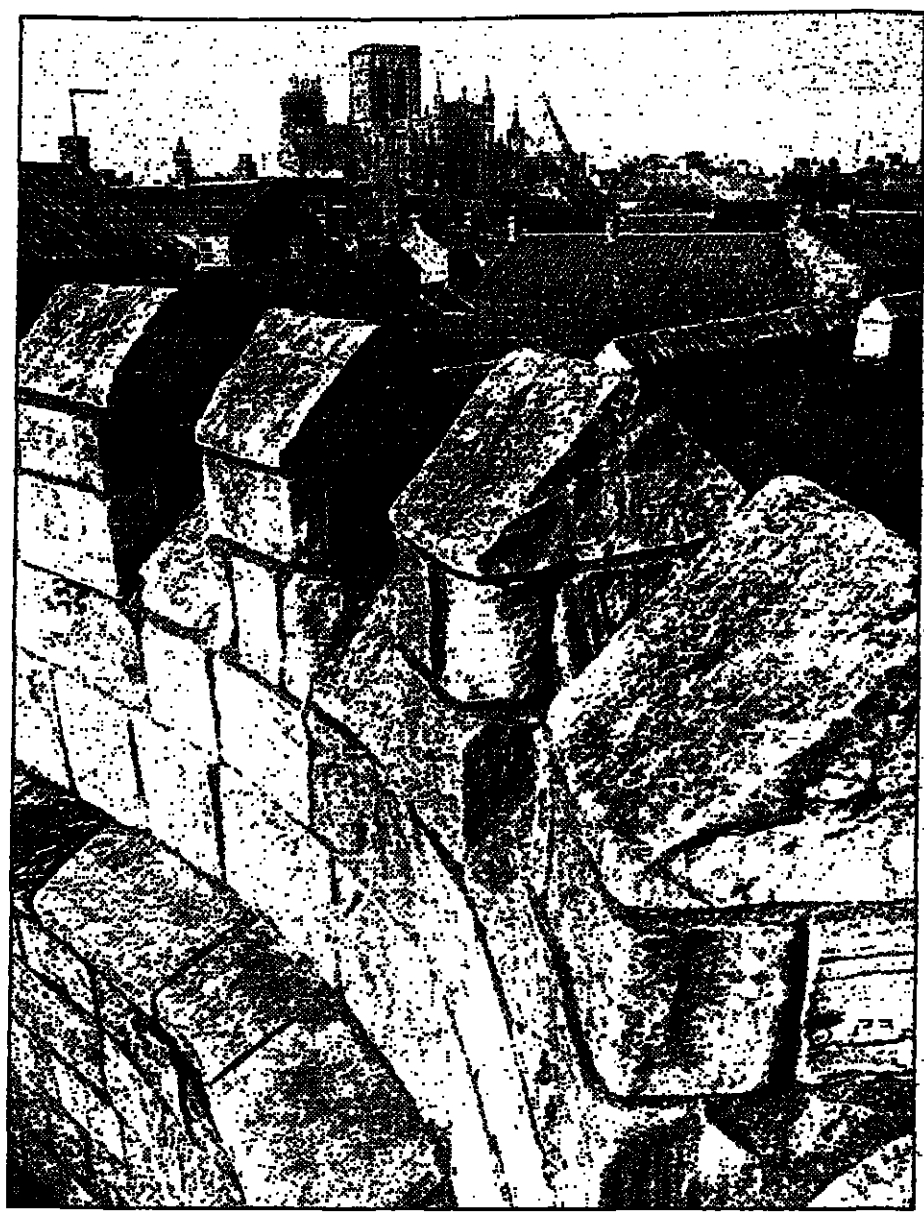
THE ancient walls around the city of York are to be restored in a programme that will cost about £2.5 million over the next 20 years.

Engineers have completed the most comprehensive survey ever of the walls, which stretch for more than two miles and incorporate 53 arches, towers and other individual structures. The survey report listed more than 320 areas in need of attention and the stone-masons will begin work on the first project in May.

The walls have their origin in the fourth century, but most of those remaining today were built in the 13th and 14th centuries from the same mellow limestone as York Minster. Both structures are popular destinations for the millions of tourists who visit the city each year.

York city council has prepared a 20-year strategy for the restoration programme. Paul Freckleton, project manager for the council's engineering services department, said yesterday: "The walls are a very ancient and massive monument. Although repair work is always going on it has tended to be piecemeal in the past."

During the next financial year the council, with 40 per cent grant aid from English Heritage, expects to spend at least £130,000 on the scheme. Apart from the wear



Keeping the 20th century out: part of the walls that are a leading tourist attraction

and tear of the weather and the treading of visitors' feet along the walkways on top of the walls, the main defect uncovered by the survey is the spreading of the inner and outer faces and the loss

of jointing mortar to the masonry. This, in turn, allows more water to seep in and accelerate the deterioration of the structure. Although built to fend off military attack, the walls also

have a modern-day role, according to John Shamon, chairman of York Civic Trust. He says that they are needed to defend the city against the further encroachment of the 20th century.

## New power sought for national parks

By MICHAEL MCCARTHY AND PETER DAVENPORT

THE national parks of England and Wales should be run by independent authorities with new powers to control threats from development and tourism, according to a report published yesterday. The parks needed a fresh impetus and a new mission, it said.

New legislation should underpin the responsibilities of park authorities and redefine their purpose, according to a parks review panel set up by the Countryside Commission. Wildlife conservation should be formally

added to the parks' role of preserving an area's natural beauty, the panel says, and it should be made clear that the enjoyment of landscape being promoted is quiet enjoyment.

In its report, *Fit for the Future*, the panel recommends that a new national park be set up in the New Forest, and that other areas be assessed for suitability. These are likely to include the South Downs, the North Pennines and the Cambrian Mountains in Wales.

The panel, chaired by Professor Ron Edwards, of Cardiff university, makes 170 recommendations for helping the ten national parks in England and Wales, and the Norfolk Broads, which enjoy similar status, to cope with severe problems caused by 100 million tourist visits a year, and by pressure from farming, mineral extraction, development and military training.

The panel suggests a reform of the statute that set up the parks, the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, to redefine their purpose. Under the proposed new act, all ten parks would, like the Peak and Lake District parks, be run by fully independent authorities, at present the other eight are administered by committees of their local county councils, which, the report suggests, are sometimes unable to act entirely in parks' best interests.

Parks' powers to control big developments, by the government and by business, should be bolstered by applying the statutory test that a development must be absolutely necessary in the national interest, and that there must be no alternative, the panel says. Government plans opposed by parks should require parliamentary approval.

## Yard backs credit card photo plan

THE issuing of cheque and credit cards with enclosed photographs of the holders would be one of the most cost-effective crime prevention strategies for years, according to Sir John Dellow, the acting commissioner of the Metropolitan Police (Stewart Tindler writes).

Sir John was speaking at the launch yesterday of an initiative to curb cheque card fraud. The scheme is being promoted by the Association for Payment Clearing Services, which represents banks and building societies. New figures show that cheque card fraud rose last year by £6 million to a record £28.5 million.

Adding photographs to cards might double or treble the cost of their production, Sir John said, but he added: "I cannot think of a more worthwhile investment." Criminals would no longer be able to take advantage of the anonymity of the cards.

## Hotelier 'gave drugs to girls'

Police in Thailand have arrested a hotel owner, suspected of supplying two British teenage girls with more than 70lb of heroin. Drug squad sources alleged that Boonchai Saengphetsiriphan, aged 26, owner of the Rincome hotel in Chiang Mai, Thailand's second city, had given Karyn Smith, aged 19, and Patricia Cahill, aged 17, the drugs last July shortly after they arrived in Thailand.

The girls were arrested at Bangkok airport with the heroin in their suitcase. Miss Smith was sentenced to 25 years in jail. Miss Cahill has pleaded not guilty and her trial is continuing.

## Shooting charge

A Royal Navy sailor, Richard Slater, aged 27, of Gillingham, Kent, was sent for trial at Portsmouth crown court yesterday after a shooting incident in which a crewman was injured on board the frigate Scylla on new year's day.

## Dog destroyed

Stephen Brown, aged 23, of West Kensington, west London, who allowed his American pitbull terrier to leap from a car window and savage a police horse was yesterday jailed for six weeks, suspended for a year. West London magistrates ordered that the dog be destroyed.

## £4,000 fine

The United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority was fined £4,000 with £1,131 costs at Lytham, Lancashire, yesterday after two workers at its Springfields complex, at Selwick near Preston, caught legionnaires' disease from badly maintained water cooling systems.

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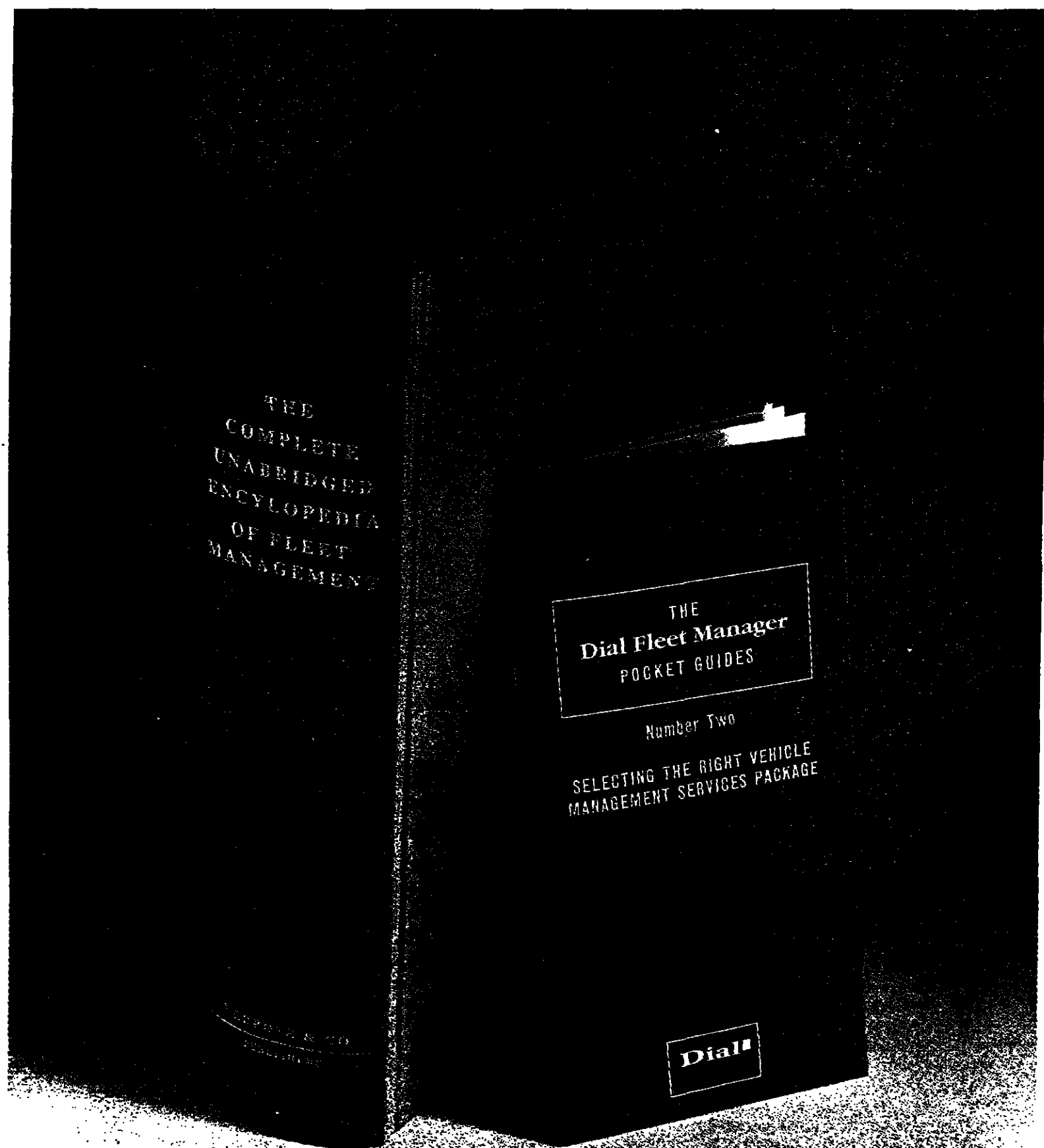
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By JOHN O'LEARY, HIGHER EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

Nottingham, Kingston and Newcastle polytechnics won awards for more than half their programmes. At East and North London polytechnics, none of the programmes was judged to be outstanding even for half the courses offered. William Staibbe, the chief executive of the council, said: "We are talking here about outstanding quality. We are not saying that if an institution does not have an award beyond fee income."

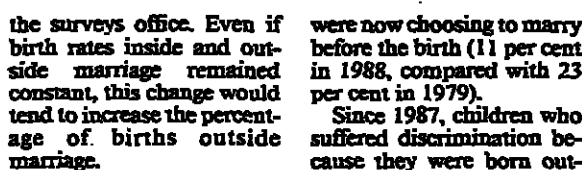
□ The Carlton club, social retreat of Tory grandees, yesterday offered advice on education policy for the party's manifesto. It called for legislation to guarantee nursery places for all children aged three and four whose parents wanted it, the removal of "unnecessary obstacles" to opting out, a review of teacher training and the abolition of local education authorities.

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**By PETER VICTOR**

The proportions of extra-marital births for the Irish republic, West Germany, Italy and Greece were less than half that for England and Wales. The proportion for Scotland was similar to that for England and Wales at roughly 26 per cent, but higher than that for Northern Ireland with 16 per cent.

With low marriage rates and high divorce rates in England and Wales, the proportion of married women of childbearing age has decreased, according to



Fewer couples who conceived outside marriage

The report concluded that the London borough of Brent had the highest ethnic minority proportion, at 27 per cent, and Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, the lowest, at 1 per cent.

Birmingham had the largest West Indian, Pakistani, and Indian populations, with 36,100, 39,700 and 49,800, respectively. The area with the largest African population was Lambeth in south London with 7,700.

Tower Hamlets, in east London, had the biggest Bangladeshi population (18,100) and Westminster the largest Chinese population (3,600). The London borough of Kensington and Chelsea had the largest Arab population with 3,500.

BY NIGEL HAWKES AND KERRY GILL

The second study, from a Leukaemia Research Fund centre at Leeds university and the children's cancer unit at Newcastle university, concludes that there is a positive link between leukaemia and fathers' exposure to radiation before conception. Their results are not an independent corroboration of the Gardner findings due to common cases. The study did, however, find significant links between

Both studies, published in this issue of the *British Medical Journal*, followed up the finding by Martin Gardner, of Southampton university, just over a year ago that the fathers who had worked at the Sellafield nuclear plant in Cumbria apparently stood an above-average chance of fathering children who contracted leukaemia.

One of today's studies, by the statistics division of the Scottish Health Service, found no evidence of increased risk

## BMA says closures add to lists

In addition, 4,400 beds were closed temporarily. Nearly 400 operating sessions a week were cancelled as a result of the closures and almost 100 out-patient sessions.

Stephen Dorrell, junior health minister, said, however, that demand for acute bed space was falling because modern medicine "allows patients to return to normal life more quickly".

## Court told of wicked attack plot

Mr Saunders, of Colchester, in Essex, said that on the day before the attack Mrs Whybrow had told him that her husband was violent towards her. "I could not get it out of my mind that someone was mistreating the woman I loved," he said.

He said that on the morning of October 18 he met his lover and "we started to formulate this wicked plan to assault her husband". Later he told Mrs Whybrow that Mr Saunders had gone to the farmhouse, where her husband was working. Mr Saunders said that he planned to make Mr Whybrow believe that he was being attacked by a burglar.

**Mr. Saunders and Mrs. Whybrow both deny charges of conspiracy to murder and conspiracy to cause grievous bodily harm. They admit conspiring to cause actual bodily harm and kidnapping. The trial continues today.**

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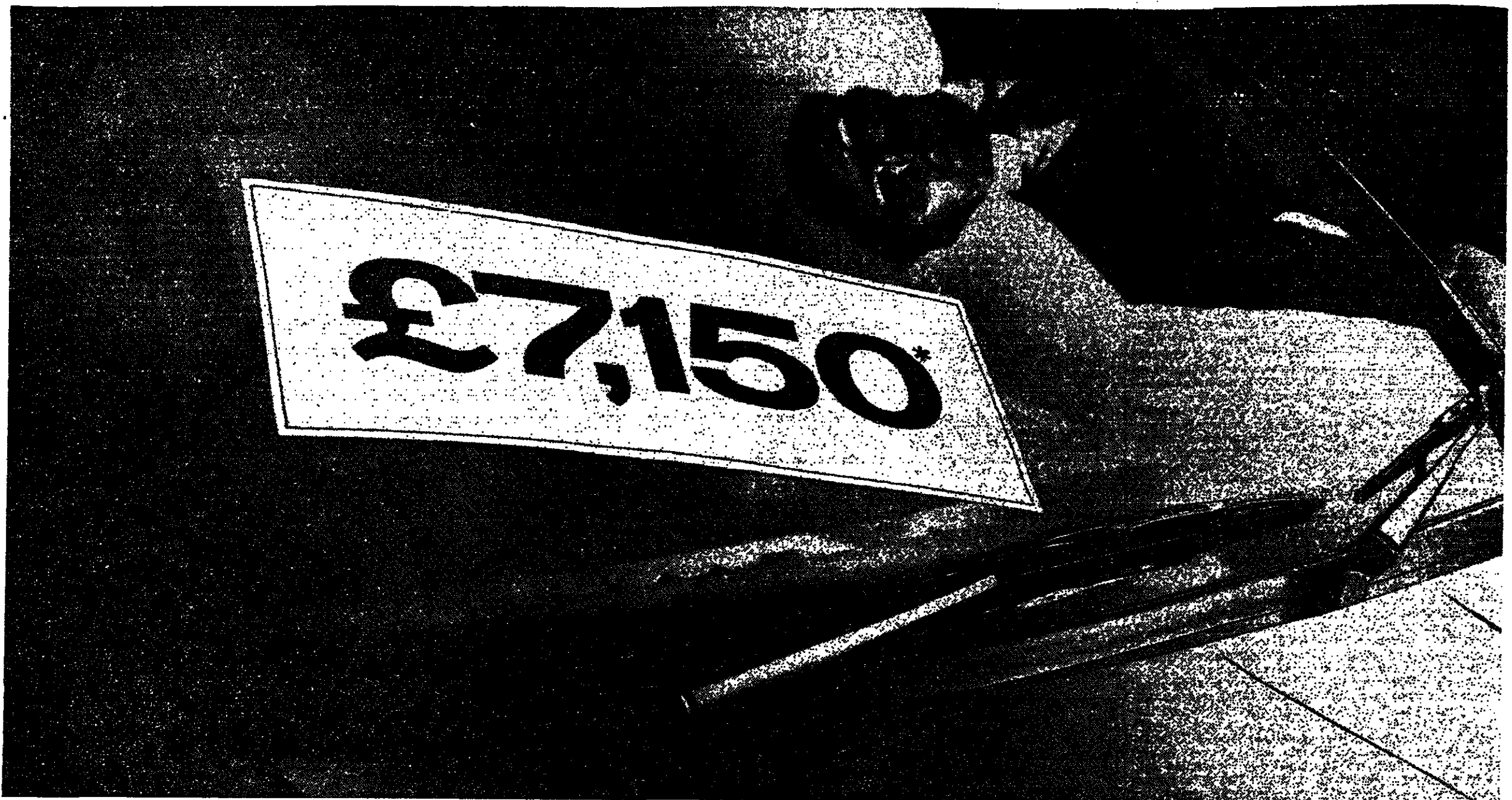
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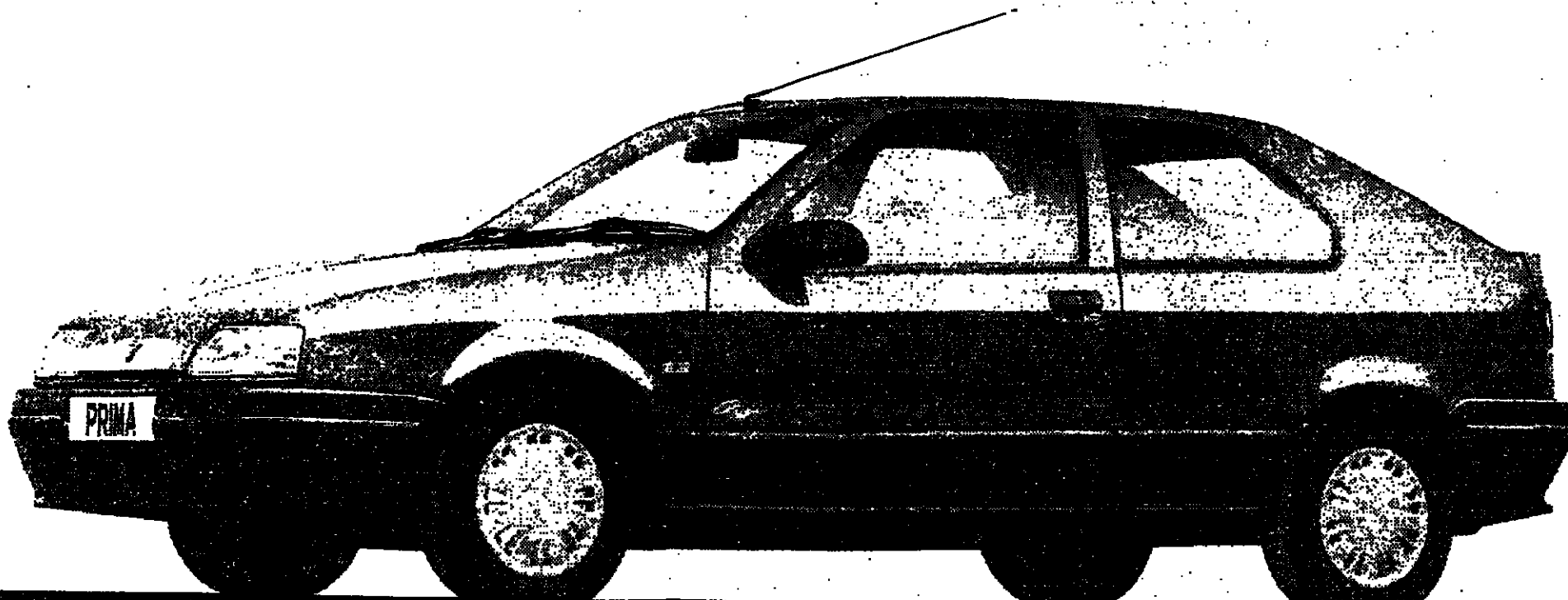
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 the report contains  
 a summary of the  
 work done during the  
 year. It is followed by  
 a detailed account of  
 the various projects  
 which have been  
 carried out. The report  
 concludes with a  
 statement of the  
 results of the work  
 done during the year.

The official investigation  
conducted in the United  
States in 1961, 1962, and  
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Map of the Baltic Sea region showing Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Moldova. A legend indicates that a solid line represents a 'Non' (likely Non-Aligned Movement) member.

A map of the Caucasus region. Labels include: UKRAINE (partially visible), GEORGIA, ARMENIA, Yerevan, AZERBAIDZHAN, Baku, TURKMENISTAN, and AFGHANISTAN. The map shows the Black Sea to the west and the Caspian Sea to the east.

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# Soviet leaders at odds over results of referendum

FROM MARY DELEVSKY IN MOSCOW

WITH most of last Sunday's referendum results in, the Soviet leadership yesterday claimed a convincing victory for its attempt to preserve the Soviet Union as a single state. But, in the Russian Federation, supporters of Boris Yeltsin, the republic's president, claimed an equal victory for the creation of a directly elected Russian presidency, indicating that the results of the Soviet Union's first exercise in popular consultation are likely to generate further conflict.

The official results of the nationwide referendum were announced to the Soviet parliament yesterday by the chairman of the central referendum commission, Vladimir Orlov, who reported that a total of 110 million people — 76 per cent of participants nationwide — had voted for the preservation of the Soviet Union "as a renewed federation of equal sovereign republics in which the rights and freedoms of all nationalities are fully guaranteed". The turnout was officially put at 80 per cent, making a nationwide "yes" vote of 56 per cent of all registered voters.

Mr Orlov said the results "prove once again the wish of the peoples of the country to live together in a single state". He said that although the figures were provisional, few changes were likely before the final results were published, probably in about a week.

Six republics, the three Baltic republics and Armenia, Georgia and Moldavia, refused to take part in the referendum and Mr Orlov praised those, mainly ethnic Russians, who had, none the less, voted there. He described the vote in Lithuania, where an estimated half a million people took part, and Moldavia, where an estimated 600,000 had voted, as creditable. If accurate, the turnout represents participation by just over 10 per cent of voters.

In the Russian Federation both the turnout and the vote for the union were more than 10 per cent lower than in most other republics, at 75 and 71 per cent respectively. The "yes" vote for the union was also only 70 per cent in the Ukraine, although turnout was more than 80 per cent, which was reflected in high support for the Ukraine's second ballot question on remaining in the Soviet Union

but on its own terms. Mr Yeltsin's majority for his concept of a directly elected Russian president was given on Wednesday as 70 per cent of votes cast. The Russian leader was reported yesterday to have said that this would strengthen his position in his struggle against conservatives in the Russian parliament and in Russia's fight for more autonomy.

The head of the Moscow Communist Party, Yuri Prokofyev, a Gorbachev supporter, told reporters yesterday that the party's own opinion polls had shown a 12 per cent drop in support for the union in the two weeks before the referendum. He conceded that the result in Moscow, which registered a bare 50.2 per cent majority for the union compared with an 80 per cent majority for the Russian presidency, left much to be desired.

Leningrad, Kiev and Sverdlovsk all registered far lower votes for the union than other places, with Kiev and Sverdlovsk voting against. With Moscow, these cities all have vocal radicals. Although the overall result will be interpreted by President Gorbachev and the central leadership as a victory, it may seem less convincing to the population at large. For people until recently used to 99 per cent turnouts and 99 per cent victories, the voting in the referendum looks precarious.

For Mr Yeltsin's proposition on the Russian presidency to gain a majority similar to that for the union was certainly a considerable achievement. On closer examination, however, his victory looks less solid.

Mr Yeltsin made the cardinal mistake before the referendum of saying that he wanted to play by more democratic rules than did the centre, saying that he would regard the victory as won only if his proposition gained the approval of more than half of all registered voters. On the preliminary figures issued on Wednesday, he gained 52.7 per cent. According to Mr Prokofyev yesterday, the final figure was hovering on or about 50 per cent, and both sides have made accusations of electoral fraud.

Mr Yeltsin's majority also looks less solid when compared with the majority for the preservation of the union. On Wednesday, he gained 52.7 per cent. According to Mr Prokofyev yesterday, the final figure was hovering on or about 50 per cent, and both sides have made accusations of electoral fraud.



## Peace talks fail to end miners' strike

FROM BRUCE CLARK AND ROBERT SEELY IN KIEV

STRIKING Ukrainian miners made virtually no progress in talks with the republic's government yesterday as allegations of widespread fraud during last Sunday's referendum surfaced in the mining city of Donetsk.

Mikhail Krylov, a militant strike organiser from Donetsk, speaking after two meetings with Ukrainian ministers in Kiev, said: "There were no results whatsoever." He predicted that the three-week stoppage, which has involved at least 120,000 of the republic's 600,000 miners, would widen.

"Nothing can be achieved unless we intensify the pressure," the miners' leader said. "We were treated just like small boys waiting to be beaten. They just told us how bad we were and how little we understood."

The Ukrainian authorities, to whom Moscow formally handed over responsibility for the republic's coal mines in

January, face a mixture of demands, ranging from a pay increase of at least 100 per cent to the release from prison of Stepan Hmara, a nationalist deputy.

The abuses reported in Donetsk by witnesses monitoring the referendum included multiple distribution of ballot papers, multiple voting and the seizure by the security forces of opposition literature. There were also reports of opposition activists being detained at polling stations and also of the stations being blocked to inspectors from some communist political parties.

● MOSCOW: The Supreme Soviet, or standing legislature, yesterday denounced the coal strike, criticising the miners for adding political demands to economic problems. It urged the miners to return to work. A resolution condemning the stoppage was adopted by 299 votes, with 16 against and 20 abstentions. (AFP)

Although all parties insisted that the referendum should be fought on the issues and not on personalities, in the Russian Federation at least they were seen by many voters in personal terms. A vote for the union was a vote of confidence in Mr Gorbachev and a vote for the Russian presidency was a vote for Mr Yeltsin.

● VILNIUS: The Communist Party in Lithuania claims shots were fired early yesterday into the party hotel here (Anatol Lieven writes). The party's deputy leader, Juozas Jermolavicius, lives in the building. Nobody was injured in the alleged attack, which took place at about 1.30am.

The incident came a few hours after Soviet "Black Beret" troops in open vehicles pursued a bus containing Lithuanian volunteers through central Vilnius, shot out its tyres, and arrested two of the Lithuanian guards. Three volunteers were injured, one seriously.



Diplomacy at work: Douglas Hurd meeting Soviet rivals Boris Yeltsin, left, president of the Russian Federation, and President Gorbachev

## Hurd and Gorbachev find common ground

FROM REUTER IN MOSCOW

DOUGLAS Hurd, the foreign secretary, said yesterday, after talks in Moscow with President Gorbachev and Aleksandr Bessmertnykh, the Soviet foreign minister, that the Soviet Union would co-operate with efforts towards Middle East peace and wanted to settle a row with the West over arms control.

Mr Hurd said there was little disagreement on Middle East issues but problems still threatened the Conventional Forces in Europe

(CFE) treaty. "We discussed the Gulf and we agreed that it was satisfactory that the Soviet Union and Britain and the Western powers had worked together to good effect, with occasional tactical divergencies," he told a news conference. "We should continue to co-operate in tackling the problems of the Middle East... including the Arab-Israeli problem."

Mr Hurd and Mr Bessmertnykh agreed on the importance of ratifying the CFE treaty, which was signed by 22 heads of state in Paris last

November but has fallen prey to different interpretations. Moscow wants to exempt three armoured divisions, including 3,500 tanks, from destruction by redefining them as naval units. Naval forces are not covered by the treaty.

The West also says the Kremlin is violating the spirit of the accord by moving thousands of pieces of military equipment east of the Ural mountains, where they are immune from cuts in European forces. "We analysed in some detail the differences which emerged about the

interpretation," Mr Hurd said. "That has to be sorted out... we have not found the answer to all the problems, but I am not pessimistic about that."

Asked about differences in Middle East policy, he said they held similar views on how to resolve the region's problems. "Both Britain and the Soviet Union believe that an international conference will be necessary, that involvement of the United Nations will be necessary... some nuances are different, but the analysis is pretty close."

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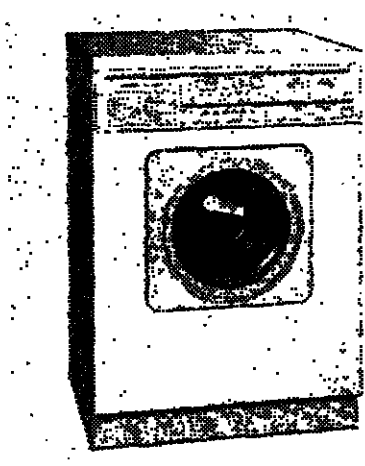
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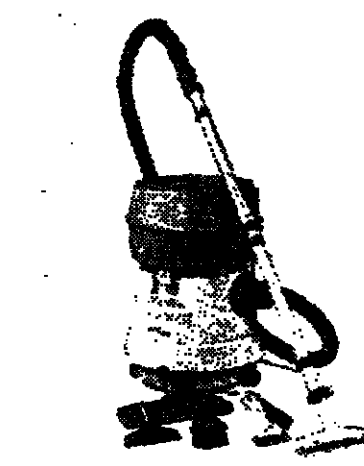
(Capacities are Fridge/Freezer)	
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# War tour de force revives Mitterrand's flagging fortunes

From PHILIP JACOBSON IN PARIS

IF SPRING in Paris brings a rejuvenated President Mitterrand skipping out on to the boulevards, tipping his boater to respectful applause from the cafe terraces, put it down to the Gulf war factor.

In his wildest dreams, this supreme political survivor cannot have believed that everything would turn out so well: the military honour of France vindicated with trifling loss of life and light damage to the nation's finances; the relationship with Washington, so often uneasy, now set fair; domestic opponents in head-long retreat.

No wonder the man looks so pleased with life. As *Le Monde* observed, Francois Mitterrand has acquired some splendid new clothes, and you can be sure that the imperial style will be much in evidence at next month's Socialist party congress. "Everything once again relies upon the slightest inflexion of his decisions and his moods," noted *Le Monde*.

Extravagant stuff, until one recalls the pre-Gulf war Mitterrand. Visibly under strain, showing all of his 74

years, acutely conscious of the gamble he was taking by committing France to fight. For a leader so obsessed with his place in history that every move seems to be taken with one eye on the judgment of posterity, the stakes were sky high — but he scooped the pot.

It could hardly matter less to him that the resumption of normal hostilities on the home political front is just around the corner. A torrid session of parliament, including some menacing motions of no-confidence, may await Michel Rocard, the prime minister, but Mitterrand is perfectly happy to let his would-be successor soak up the punishment.

So where does the great manipulator now intend to focus his attention for his remaining four years in power? Notoriously indifferent to domestic affairs, what can he hold out to the number of French who, barely six months ago, were wondering if a decade of their president was not enough?

One significant clue was delivered recently by Roland

Dumas, the foreign minister, a shrewd and faithful ally. To the surprise of the French establishment, M Dumas chose an interview with *Le Monde* to set about rubbishing the Gaullist legacy in foreign policy, condemning what was once sacred doctrine in France as "a series of illusions".

Most observers concluded that the president was signalling that France could no longer pursue its own lofty notion of independence in foreign affairs. Without saying it out loud, for some heresies still cannot be voiced, M Dumas seemed to accept that in the world after the Gulf war, the French would be well advised to settle for something less than the old yearning for great power status.

With Bonn temporarily out of step from its handling of the war and Mrs Thatcher permanently sidelined, the moment is ripe for M Mitterrand to resume the quest for what he believes to be his, and France's, rightful place at the head of a truly united Europe. That should keep him busy enough until 1995.



Spring shower: jets from riot police water-cannon breaking up the traditional equinox celebration in Warsaw yesterday. The police intervened, also using tear gas, after thousands of students, skinheads and football supporters rampaged through the old town (AFP reports from

Warsaw). At least 30 youths were arrested and several demonstrators were wounded, according to a private radio station. There was no immediate official confirmation of the report. Windows were shattered in the Royal Castle and public transport was disrupted.

## Germany abandons nuclear hopes

From IAN MURRAY IN BONN

GERMANY, in the face of opposition led by environmentalists and farmers, yesterday wrote off a 7 billion marks (£2.4 billion) project that was intended to put it in the forefront of nuclear energy technology. The decision, coming after a project for processing atomic waste was abandoned last year, could herald the end of the nuclear industry in Germany.

The project to build Germany's only fast breeder reactor on flat farmland at Kalkar near Cleves, was proposed in 1972 to generate electricity for the region and sell some of the capacity to The Netherlands and Belgium. At the same time, the government and industry hoped to gain experience in fast-breeder technology, which allows more efficient use of uranium in generating electricity.

Kalkar was due to start operating in 1979, initially producing 300 megawatts, but gradually expanding to a 10,000 megawatt capacity. However, construction was persistently delayed by legal appeals and demonstrations. The building was only ready to start up a pre-nuclear warm-up test in 1985, and to switch to nuclear production a year later. By then, the accident at Chernobyl had increased local opposition. The Social Democratic government in North Rhine-Westphalia, which had to license the reactor to start up, refused to do so.

The federal government has allowed the station to continue the warm-up in the hopes of persuading the state government to reconsider. The running costs alone have been around 100 million marks a year, the bulk of which was paid by Bonn. Yesterday Heinz Riesenhuber, the technology and research minister, decided it was pointless to go on. "We cannot expect to obtain an operating licence in the foreseeable future," he said.

Ironically, the abandonment of the project comes just after the Greens, who gained much national prominence in the campaign against Kalkar, have lost all their seats in the Bundestag. It illustrates how the Social Democrats, like all the main parties, are trying to gain support by putting on Green "clothes".

## Havel calls on West for aid

Brussels — President Havel of Czechoslovakia yesterday pleaded for Western help to stop Eastern Europe sliding deeper into a "political, economic and security vacuum" (Peter Guilford writes).

Mr Havel said at Nato headquarters here that the euphoria which had gripped the former Soviet bloc when communism collapsed was now being replaced by crime, poverty, unrest and "intense feelings of hopelessness". Decades of Soviet oppression had bred nationalism, xenophobia and intolerance which threatened the stability of the continent, he said.

Mr Havel's visit is the first by a Warsaw Pact leader to Nato headquarters. Others, including President Gorbachev, are expected to follow.

## Marcos pledge

Manila — President Aquino has promised to lift the ban on Imelda Marcos, widow of the former president, to allow her to return to the Philippines to face trial. A state lawyer said charges could be laid within four or five months. Sources close to Mrs Marcos said she was applying for a passport. (Reuters)

## Democracy blow

Bangkok — Burma's democracy movement suffered another blow when Daw Myint Myint Khin resigned from the central committee of the National League for Democracy. Friends said she resigned because league officials, under government pressure, would soon repudiate their leader, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

## Exile dispute

Johannesburg — The repatriation of thousands of political exiles to South Africa has been disrupted by a dispute over the role of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. A flight from Lusaka was cancelled because of Pretoria's reluctance to give the agency facilities in South Africa.

## Air crew missing

San Diego — Twenty-six crewmen were missing after two US Navy submarine-hunting aircraft collided during a training mission off the southern California coast, a navy spokesman said. Search and rescue teams in helicopters found some debris but located no bodies or survivors, the spokesman added. (AP)

## No net gain from sub that got away

From ROGER BOYES IN WARSAW

THE herring fleet out of Gdansk was having a poor night just outside Polish territorial waters last Tuesday. The small trawler Hel-136 was heading for home when suddenly it was tugged backwards with a fierce jerk.

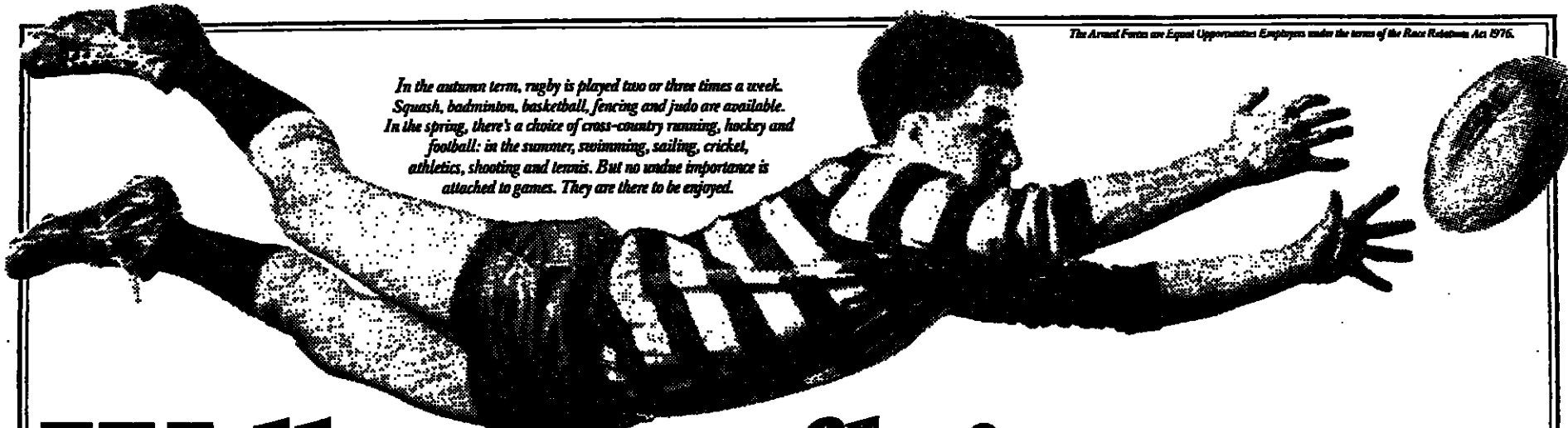
The skipper guessed that he was dealing with a submarine, his biggest catch ever. For four hours the submarine refused to surface. The Polish navy identified the submarine as a Foxrot, some 270 feet long which usually travels with a crew of 75. After one final effort, the submarine broke free and sped back towards Soviet waters. Soviet naval high command must have

been on high alert. In less than an hour a Soviet vessel drew alongside the Hel-136.

A Soviet commodore, who gave his name as Rabikov, boarded the trawler and presented an immaculately-typed Russian language report of the accident and a bill for 180,000 roubles (£180,000) for damages.

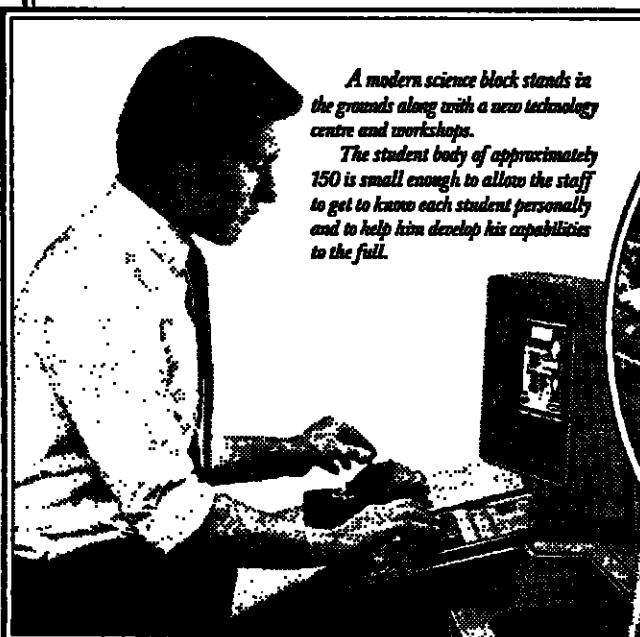
The Polish skipper presented his claim — for broken nets — and war in the east was averted.

The big catch has become the stuff of dockside legend — and, in the manner of fishermen everywhere, the size of the Foxrot that got away is growing by the day.



In the autumn term, rugby is played two or three times a week. Squash, badminton, basketball, fencing and judo are available. In the spring, there's a choice of cross-country running, hockey and football: in the summer, swimming, sailing, cricket, athletics, shooting and tennis. But no undue importance is attached to games. They are there to be enjoyed.

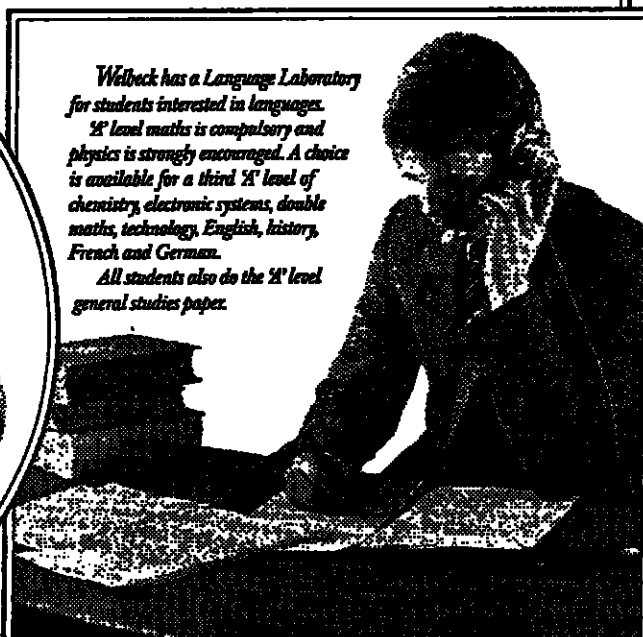
# Welbeck: a flying start to a military career.



A modern science block stands in the grounds along with a new technology centre and workshops. The student body of approximately 150 is small enough to allow the staff to get to know each student personally and to help him develop his capabilities to the full.



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It could be an eye-opener for you.

## Army Officer



MARCH 22

### Havel calls on West for aid

els - President Havel of the Czech Republic, who visited the West for the first time since the fall of Communism, called on the West for aid in the "political and security" transition to a free society.

Havel said at his quarters here that the Czechs had been "oppressed" by the Soviet bloc for 40 years and were now "replaced by the West, which is a source of hopelessness".

He said the Czechs were "not yet free" and that the West should help them to build a "new society".

Havel's visit is the first by a former Communist leader to the West since the fall of the Berlin Wall.

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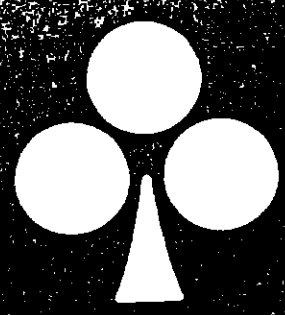
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## PALESTINIANS

## Residence curbs will rob Kuwait of skills

By MICHAEL BINYON  
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

KUWAIT'S threat to halve its non-Kuwaiti population would, if carried out rapidly, have a devastating effect both on the emirate and on its immigrant Palestinian population, the very people who developed it from a sleepy desert nation into one of the world's most modern welfare states.

Without them, Kuwait would be critically short of doctors, lawyers, engineers, bankers, civil servants and businessmen. Their departure would rob the country of professional expertise at the moment it is most needed. It would cut off the vital flow of remittances to Jordan and the West Bank, where most of the Palestinians have relatives, and might spur an exodus of Palestinians from the whole Gulf region.

Before the Iraqi invasion there were 400,000 Palestinians in Kuwait. Educated, and with a reputation for hard work, they staffed the ministries, filled the higher echelons of the civil service and held top jobs in the oil industry. Apart from expatriate Americans and Europeans, they were the most senior foreigners resident in Kuwait. But although many arrived more than 30 years ago, and the younger generation has lived nowhere else, few hold Kuwaiti citizenship.

Only about 200,000 Palestinians remain in Kuwait after the Gulf war, and they are being harassed amid a wave of anti-Palestinian feeling. Few who have left will be allowed to return, and the government is unlikely to renew the residence permits of many still in Kuwait.

The government has insisted Kuwait cannot sustain the pre-war population of almost two million, of which Kuwaitis made up less than a third. Economists say expelling foreigners would be possible only if Kuwait renounces plans for diversification, abandons proposals to build labour-intensive aluminium plants and concentrates on core oil-related industries. Kuwaitis would have to reduce dependence on servants.

Indians, Pakistanis and those filling simple labouring jobs are initially most likely to be affected by stricter immigration controls. But another exodus for the much-dispossessed Palestinians looks inevitable.

Israelis accused: Israel's security services routinely torture Palestinian prisoners under interrogation, B'Tselem, the country's leading human rights watchdog, has said. It said methods included beatings, sleep and food deprivation and prolonged detention in cupboard-like cells.

Leading article, page 17

## IRAQ

## Rebels brace for Saddam offensive to retake Kirkuk

From CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN DAMASCUS

IRAQI opposition euphoria over the fall of the key northern city of Kirkuk was tempered yesterday by a warning from one of the two main Kurdish leaders that forces supporting President Saddam Hussein were grouping for a decisive battle to regain the area, which supplies a quarter of Iraq's oil.

Minutes after receiving frontline radio reports from the war zone, Jalal Talabani, the head of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, predicted that a big battle for control of the city of some million people would begin in the next few days. "The Iraqi government is preparing itself by sending more troops to Kurdistan to try to recover Kirkuk, we are certain of that," he

said. "They have sent tanks, artillery and Frog missiles to launch their counter-attack. We expect it in the coming days and think we will defeat them."

Western military experts monitoring the conflict believe a failure by the government forces to retake Kirkuk could prove fatal to Saddam's regime since it would lead to further large-scale defections from his already beleaguered army.

Mr Talabani, a former lawyer, disclosed that the retreating Iraqi forces had set fire to four oil wells in Kirkuk in an attempt to emulate the scorched-earth policy used in Kuwait. "They tried to bomb the wells with napalm and phosphorous bombs dropped

from helicopters and fixed-wing planes, but our men hit back with anti-aircraft guns we had seized earlier and they succeeded in setting only four of the wells ablaze."

He added: "The latest position from our radio is that all of Kirkuk is liberated and our forces are advancing on the city of Mosul, where they have just taken an enemy post on the outskirts. We have captured many government tanks and artillery pieces and, in Kirkuk alone, have taken 12,000 Iraqi prisoners of war."

At noon yesterday, according to rebel radio reports received in Damascus, the sky over Kirkuk was free of Iraqi aircraft. Long-range artillery duels accounted for most of the fighting. Earlier, ecstatic scenes were reported on the streets of the city as residents danced and chanted victory slogans and fired rifles in the air.

Mr Talabani, whose party is one of the main elements in the opposition's 17-member joint action committee, has become one of the more trusted conduits of information about the uprising in northern Iraq, which is more extensive and durable than that in the mainly Arab south. "In Kirkuk we have captured two military airfields, one used by their (government) helicopters and the other by war planes," he said. "We are telling the prisoners to go where they like once we have taken their weapons but many do not want to return to government-held territory."

Mr Talabani was in sober mood about the prospects of the fighting yet to come before the capture of Kirkuk is consolidated. He said he feared Frog missiles would be used against civilians there and in other captured areas. "I am expecting there will be a big battle because Iraq will do its best to regain Kirkuk and we will defend and protect it. Whatever happens we will not allow it to be easy for them to win again."

The oil fields of Kirkuk are the more valuable to Saddam because all of Iraq's oil-export installations in the south were destroyed during the Gulf war. Were the economic blockade to be lifted, oil experts have calculated that Iraq could still export 800,000 barrels a day from its northern oil fields through Turkey.

Despite wider predictions by other Kurdish sources, Mr Talabani said the Kurdish guerrillas did not plan to march on Baghdad until the people of the capital had themselves risen against the government. "We do not want to convert this into a war between Kurds and Arabs," he declared.

"There are two nationalities in Iraq, Kurds and Arabs. There must be a federation between the Kurdish and Arab people and an Iraqi central government for both," he said.

Conor Cruise O'Brien, page 16



## JORDAN

## Dismay greets vote to cut aid

From ADAM KELLIER IN AMMAN

JORDANIANS reacted with dismay yesterday to the United States Senate decision to cut off economic and military aid to the kingdom. The decision was viewed as a petty punishment for the country's pro-Iraqi sentiments during the Gulf confrontation.

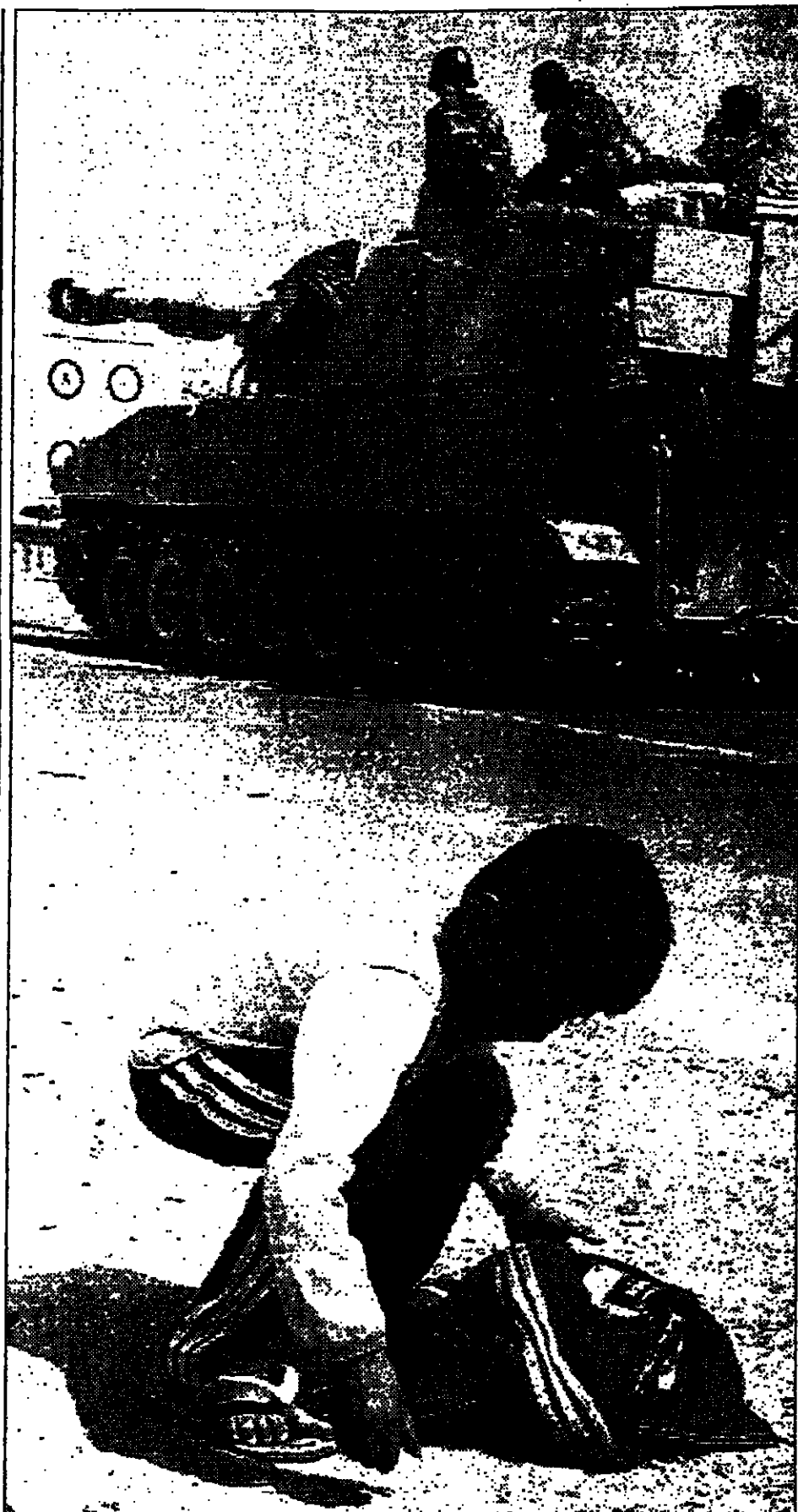
One senior official said: "You asked us to be more democratic, and when we took to the streets you didn't like what we heard." He added that the Senate had forgotten that Jordan met Washington's aid criteria by being politically moderate, having a free economy and refusing to harbour terrorists.

In a voice vote on Wednesday the Senate decided to block \$20 million (£11 million) in military assistance and \$35 million in economic aid to Jordan. Although President Bush opposes the decision and may veto it if the House of Representatives supports the Senate, the move reinforced the belief here that Jordan has been clumsily cast as an enemy by politicians

eager to prove their pro-Israeli credentials. Washington said it was reviewing the aid package after Mr Bush took strong exception to a speech by King Hussein alleging that America sought to destroy Iraq. Relations reached a low point with near-daily anti-American demonstrations.

Ibrahim Ezzeddin, the information minister, said the Senate's move showed it misunderstood Jordan's stance of objecting to Iraq's use of force but wanting a diplomatic, preferably Arab, solution. "One is distressed to have Jordan treated in such a manner and to still have its position not clear," he said. "I think Jordan should be supported. We have had a very clear position throughout the war... we have explained it time and again."

America has aided Jordan for 40 years, and Jordanians were piqued that the senators wanted to withhold \$55 million, while setting aside \$650 million in war aid for Israel.



Peace dividend: an Iraqi boy gathers up food thrown by American soldiers in a convoy along the Safwan to Basra highway, an area suffering acute shortages

## INDIA AND BANGLADESH

## Displaced Gulf workers facing a bleak future

From CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN DELHI AND AHMED FAZI IN DHAKA

NOWHERE in India has the loss of earnings from Kuwait been more devastating than in Kerala, a communist-run state that has traditionally exported tens of thousands of its menfolk to the emirate.

The mood in the south-western coastal state was bleak yesterday after the announcement by Kuwait of new limits on foreign workers. Hundreds of villages, looking incongruously prosperous from years of home remittances, had banked on being able to send their young men abroad soon.

Former Gulf workers, mostly unemployed or working for a fraction of their former wages, greeted the defeat of Iraq with celebrations on the streets of

Trivandrum, the state capital. They believed Kuwait would soon need them back. The jubilant reaction was a far cry from the prevailing mood in India, which was unhappy with the war—even if it did go along with United Nations resolutions permitting the use of force.

Remittances to Indian workers from Kuwait in 1989-90 totalled nearly three billion rupees (£38 million), small compared with total Indian expatriate earnings from countries such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. But it was to Kerala that Kuwait preferred to go, creating a heavy economic dependence on the export of labour.

Almost every former Indian worker in Kuwait has money in banks there.

Rahmat Ali, from a village outside Dhaka in Bangladesh, has sold his last patch of ricefield to the village headman and has barely managed an air ticket and the middlemen's fee for his return to Kuwait. It was his only hope of recovering his acre of land he had mortgaged to the moneylender to get the job of a grocer's assistant in the emirate two years ago. But as he sat inside his mud hut in Mantail village yesterday, Mr Ali, aged 35, saw his hopes dashed. With Kuwait's new restrictions on migrant labour, he has little chance of returning to the job he abandoned a month after the Iraqi invasion on August 2.

Mr Ali is one of the 75,000 Bangladeshis, from doctors to bus drivers, who lived in the emirate and fled from the occupation. They contributed more than \$140 million annually to the impoverished country through remittances home. Most are now penniless, having sold their property to pay the charges of recruiting agents. The association of Bangladeshis in Kuwait estimated that more than 50,000 workers, mostly unskilled, are in severe economic straits.

## Bonn to pay full share of war bill

Bonn — Germany confirmed yesterday that it means to pay the United States its promised contributions to the Gulf costs in full and on time, but wants to review the way the bill has been calculated (see page 1).

Theo Waigel, the German finance minister, travels to Washington on Monday to discuss this, amid reports that the final cost could be lower than was thought when Germany promised to pay a further \$5.5 billion (£3.1 billion) towards American expenses.

The opposition Social Democrats have claimed that America will make a profit of at least \$18 billion from the war and has called on the government not to pay in full. Bonn, however, accepts that even if the war costs were lower than expected, America will have high ongoing military expenses in the Middle East until stability is restored.

Dieter Vogel, the government's spokesman, said yesterday that Germany would honour its undertakings, with the last instalment of \$1.6 billion being paid on March 28 as promised. This implies that Britain will also receive payment of all the money promised by Bonn.

## Ozal takes a lap of honour

Istanbul — President Ozal of Turkey sets off for Washington today on what is a lap of honour for his close support during the Gulf war. He will meet President Bush tomorrow at Camp David, a venue normally used for the hosts of negotiations. Such a high profile visit, in Mr Ozal's eyes, is a vindication of the fierce criticism at home of his war policy.

Mr Ozal will, however, be obliged to return from the United States with something more than reflected glory if he is to convert Turkey's part in the war into political opportunity as he will have to weigh up whether he can push for an autumn election. To wait another year means risking a further deterioration in an economy hit by the Gulf war.

## Soldiers killed

Spain — Ninety-two soldiers belonging to Senegal's contingent in the anti-Iraq coalition during the Gulf war were killed when their transport plane crashed in Saudi Arabia, Dakar radio reported. They were returning from a pilgrimage to Mecca, the radio said. (Reuters)

## Refugees refuse

Bonn — About 300 Soviet Jewish émigrés, who sought refuge in Berlin during the Gulf war, are refusing to return to Israel. Several claimed they had been forced to settle in the occupied territories. The Berlin senate will now have to decide whether to allow them to remain.

## Kuwaitis freed

Kuwait — Iraq has freed about 1,500 Kuwaitis captured during its occupation of the emirate. They have been transferred to a base in north-western Saudi Arabia under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and will fly home from there, Kuwaiti military sources said. (Reuters)

## Slick cleared

Abu Dhabi — The Norwegian tanker Al-Wasit has almost cleared a Gulf war oil spill from Saudi Arabia's Khafji refinery. It has mopped up half a million barrels of spill oil, which will be reprocessed. The Al-Wasit is now preparing to tackle a much larger spill from Kuwait's al-Ahmadi terminal. (AFP)

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## UNITED STATES

## Swinging Sixties lights young America's fire

In these days when generals are the heroes of young America, it might seem odd that hundreds of thousands, from coast to coast, are flocking out over a film that glorifies the psychedelic excesses of the 1960s. That has been the achievement of *The Doors*, a new work by Oliver Stone about the doomed rock singer-poet Jim Morrison, who embodied the hedonistic abandon of the late 1960s before drinking himself to death in Paris at the age of 27 in 1971. Stone's film, which stars Van Klimer as Morrison, lead singer of the group The Doors, has touched a raw nerve, forcing many to look back with pain on the era that many now think a mistake.

While young America is rediscovering flower-power, many in the generation that made love, not war, are appalled that their children should want to relive their own long-dead youth. "The youth of the 1990s... are being force-fed nostalgia trips of 45-year-olds in mid-life crises," said Karen Fagen, a former flower-child from San Francisco. In *The New York Times*, another baby boomer worried that Stone, Hollywood's resident analyst of the era with his *Midnight Express*, *Platoon* and *Born on the Fourth of July*, was glamorising and sanitising the marijuana haze of his youth. "This wasn't supposed to happen. The mental charter of the 1960s expressly forbade decline and the passage of time."

The critics, reconstructed 1960s people for the most part, are unhappy that Stone is toying with an icon best left interred. "The movie is pure exploitation - an extended self-important freakout," said Tavische Rafferty in the *New Yorker*. "We feel like voyeurs of our

own memories." Stone says his film is about the "spiritual quest" of America's self-styled Rimbaud, his attempt to "break on through to the other side". The idea and the name of his band came from William Blake's line: "If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite." Young Americans are flocking to Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris, where the late rocker's grave is drawing more pilgrims than the tombs of Chopin, Wilde, Proust and Flaubert. The faithful are also enjoying a permanent *Doors* happening at the Providence Mountains park in the Mojave desert of California. The *Doors* anthem *Light My Fire* and their albums are selling faster now than they ever did.

Stone attributes the craze to what he calls a "time-war" that is bringing America and Europe back to the political sensibilities of the 1960s. It is certainly obvious that the decade is enjoying a comeback in fashion, thanks to the return of the mini-skirt, kaftans, baby-doll dresses and bell-bottom hipsters. But the rebelliousness of the old counter-culture is nowhere to be found - to the relief of reformed hippies and the disgust of the nostalgic middle-aged.

In a two-page diatribe in *Newsweek* this week, George Will, the conservative commentator denounced the film and the decade as a nefarious influence on the young. Jim Morrison was a pathetic drunk, he said. The "juvenileocracy" of the 1960s was responsible for destroying American education.

Charles Bremner

## WORLD APPEAL FOR IRAQI WAR RELIEF

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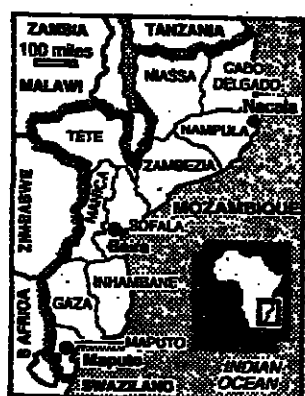


## Renamo guerrillas show a softer side in the wilderness

From JAN RAATH  
IN HARARE

REPORTS have emerged here this week of conditions under Mozambique's rebel guerrilla movement, which provide unexpected evidence of a ragtag but highly motivated force, and an isolated civilian population almost thriving in the African wilderness.

Dudley Searle, a Zimbabwean businessman abducted last year and held for two months by Renamo, the Mozambique National Resistance Movement, broke his silence with the first public account of his experience. Dominic Gross, the delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross to Mozambique, told of the organisation's breakthrough into guerrilla areas where, the only import in the past five years has beenessian bags and bits of cloth for clothing.



Their evidence is at odds with Renamo's reputation for brutality and suggests that while the abuses like facial mutilation, civilian killings and forced labour occur in the operational zones, there is another face to Renamo which can be seen by many Mozambicans as a political alternative to President Chissano's Frelimo party. "The

people have found a balance with their natural environment," said Mr Gross. "There is no rubbish, no paper, no cigarette butts. They are well fed, and they don't appear to be unhappy. It is a deep, traditional life that hasn't been touched by modern society."

In January, Mr Gross flew into Caniase, in the north of Sofala province, and then walked to Sanga-Sanga, a former administrative post which is of insufficient strategic value to be drawn into the 16-year war.

The people live in scattered villages, composed of a few men with ten wives each. For the past five years since Frelimo's withdrawal, they have been free to cultivate food, hunt, fish and draw water from streams unpolluted by overpopulated refugee areas.

Renamo has set up an administration with civilian officials and restored to the traditional chiefs much of the power that was removed by Frelimo at independence in 1975. But isolation has also meant deprivation. "There was a complete lack of manufactured goods and medicines," he said. The Red Cross medical team found indications of a high infant mortality rate, conjunctivitis, and venereal disease. The guerrillas — among whom were 14-year-old boys — who snatched Mr Searle in January last year were "ragamuffins," he said. But they were "so highly motivated ... that it was frightening that anyone could be in such conditions," he said. They wanted the Portuguese to return and they "worshipped" the movement's leader, Afonso Dhlakama. Mr Searle sees little hope for an early end to the war. "There is no incentive for them to lay down their arms," he said. "This is all they know. Where is their livelihood going to come from if they have to give up their guns?"

## Faltering steps to statehood

From DALE LAUTENBACH IN WINDHOEK

A YEAR ago, world attention focused on Namibia, as Africa's last colony hoisted its flag at independence, a bright yellow sun on horizontal stripes of blue, white, red and green. All clichés were forgiven in the atmosphere of optimism that rose with that flag: it was a new dawn.

One year later the young nation is almost forgotten and only a handful of international journalists arrived for the first anniversary celebrations yesterday.

Namibia has deep economic problems and unemployment above 40 per cent. Capital remains largely in white hands. What it does not have is social chaos as a number of doubters might have thought inevitable. The

South West Africa People's Organisation government has replaced the rhetoric of the liberation war with the rhetoric of "phase two of the struggle", the economic battle-ground. Its new message: "no handouts ... it's our nation now and we must make it work".

In his address to the nation yesterday, President Nujoma promised a brighter future. Hydrocarbon exploration is high on the nation's list of hopes and, as fish stocks recover, agricultural projects take root and Namibia's accession to the Lomé IV convention opens new markets, there remains a chance that the high expectations of a still frustrated majority might be realised.

## Shoulder for a nation to cry on

Ever serene, the Dalai Lama clings to his hopes for Tibet after 32 years of frustration, writes George Hill



Long view: exiled from his homeland and ignored by Western governments, the Dalai Lama keeps up his three-decade-old campaign for Tibet's freedom

AFTER 32 years of knocking at closed doors, anyone might be forgiven for showing signs of discouragement. But the Dalai Lama, visiting Britain while the British government pointedly continues to ignore him, retains an air of buoyancy and even cheerfulness. In the incongruous setting of a Mayfair hotel suite this week, he fielded political questions with serene assurance, wearing the saffron and maroon robes of a monk, a bracelet of stone prayer beads and a pair of polished brown shoes of Western style.

His main theme on this visit has been to apply the obvious parallels of current world politics to the ordeal of Tibet. "I am not expecting some dramatic intervention like Kuwait received, but at least the kind of support that your government has given to the Baltic states," he says. "While making every effort to sustain good relations with the Soviet Union, the government stands firm at a certain point and says: 'That is wrong.'"

With Tibet as firmly as ever in the grip of Chinese rule, his hopes of achieving even limited freedom may seem as hopeless as ever. But he draws comfort from the convulsions in other parts of the communist world, and in China itself, which, like the Soviet Union, is an empire that embraces many ethnic minorities which share the desire of the Tibetans for significant autonomy.

"The Tiananmen affair has made a great difference," he says. "I believe it has shortened the lifespan of the present regime and helped open the minds of Chinese. Some of our Chinese brothers and sisters have told me that, before that event, they took almost

no interest in Tibet. Since then they have begun to believe what Tibetans say."

His main role is to keep the Tibetan issue before the eyes of the world, and to act as a focus for his people's sense of identity, in exile and within Tibet itself.

"At the ordinary perceptual level, some older people among the Tibetans may believe that every activity of the Dalai Lama must be perfect, but I deliberately reject those views. The material procedure for selecting

a Dalai Lama gives no guarantee that he can do no wrong. For instance, two years ago, I made a bad decision — with thoughtful concentration and sincere motivation — although many Tibetans disagreed with it. Now I must accept that, in spite of my hopes and my sincerity, my initiative has completely failed. So it doesn't matter."

He paused for another long, deep, unembittered laugh. He was referring to his so-called Strasbourg pro-

posal of 1988, in which he offered to renounce Tibet's claims to independence in the realms of international relations and defence, in return for genuine internal autonomy. China has not replied to this proposal, which many Tibetans felt yielded too much. Now the Dalai Lama has announced that, unless China responds in the near future, he will withdraw the offer.

He has made it clear that if he is ever able to return to a self-governing Tibet, he would wish to see an elected government, and would withdraw from "any form of leadership". He has also considered the question of the longer term future of his office. "When I am no more, it will be for the majority of the people to decide whether the Dalai institution should continue. If they wish to keep it, there will be the question of how to choose a new one. They may choose the traditional way. Other options would be for me to appoint a successor, on grounds of seniority or some other qualification. Or a successor could be chosen after my death."

A leader separated from the majority of his people, and dedicated to non-violence in the face of armed oppression, must often make hard decisions. In the face of an increasingly organised Chinese policy of shooting down non-violent demonstrations within Tibet, he has changed his views about such demonstrations. "In previous times, I very much admired and appreciated the demonstrators' determination, even at sacrifice of their own lives. But the Chinese arrangements to attack such protests are now so efficient that I am compelled to advise Tibetans that under present circumstances public demonstrations are really dangerous. Whether they listen or not is my big worry. For us, every single Tibetan killed is a big loss."

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# TOWARDS THE LIGHT

The poll tax is dead: may it rest in peace. It has not been unique in the list of crass acts of British governments but it must rank high. It was introduced in defiance of all advice other than from sycophants, in defiance of common sense and public opinion. The tax was a monument to the arrogance lurking beneath the surface of Britain's over-centralised system of power. Its demise is a testament to the dictum that government cannot fool all the people all the time. As Michael Heseltine said yesterday, "the public has not been persuaded that the charge is fair." If only cabinet ministers who decided to say, see and hear no evil of the tax, and backbench Conservatives who were cravenly whipped into submission, had showed the same suspension of consent...

Whatever part John Major and his colleagues played in this, he should be congratulated on getting hold of this first great crisis of his administration. As *The Times* has pleaded since he took office, he has stamped his authority on the poll tax argument and told his colleagues to toe the line. Even if details have yet to be resolved — quite properly since consultation has as yet been meagre — the course on which the cabinet is set is clear. The whips, who played so devastating a part in creating this tax, can now play their part in dismantling it. Rebellions should be sparse.

Mr Heseltine's statement yesterday was a political masterpiece. Behind him were MPs covered in the scars of poll tax. To have apologised to them, even to the country, was more than political flesh and blood could bear. But there was no equivocating on the central issue: poll tax is to go and local taxation is to be based once again on the wealth enshrined in property, as in most democracies and as in Britain until last year.

The basis of this valuation remains a matter of debate. Rental valuation must be the favourite, at least in the short term, since the rate register is still in place. There is no reason why such a tax should not be introduced next year, rather than as promised in 1993-4. Capital values require a new bureaucratic structure and yield much wider variations in incidence, offending the principle that "everyone must pay" in the case of poorer properties and severely penalising those with most valuable properties.

But regrettably Mr Heseltine is still in thrall to his boss's fear of the poll tax backwashmen: the new tax will be property based but should "reflect the number of adults in a household." He did not say how. He certainly did not show that this could be achieved without a separate register. Various hair-brained schemes are floating about Whitehall. One is a zany trust-the-taxpayer system of additions or subtractions based on some notional household "norm". None of these make any sense.

Capitation taxes are either income taxes or poll taxes. Relating income taxes to a property register may keep the army of now unemployed poll-tax collectors in business, but to what end? Income taxes already contribute to central government's support of local services. And a property value tax, provided it is rebated and reasonable in incidence, would reflect household prosperity.

Mr Heseltine must hope that this ghost of the poll tax will disperse as rebel ardour cools. Single people in large, valuable properties must accept that their living space is to be taxable. If they are poor, then the rebate system should help them, but not the entire structure of the tax itself. Mr Heseltine would do better to concentrate his attention on his own declared objective for this aspect of the new tax, that "most people should make some contribution." For this purpose rental values are better than capital values, for they would sweep in most council tenants, and there should be stringent rules

for declaring the tax element in public and private-sector rents. With a modicum of ingenuity, "most people" can be made to pay rates.

More ambitiously, Mr Heseltine has combined this necessary act of fiscal rescue with a proposed redefinition of the whole of local government, at least in England and Wales. He has wisely been specific only in his unspecificity. He is not abolishing the counties nor is he ruling out continued two-tier administrations in rural areas. He has accepted that one-tier government is probably more cost-effective but he is prepared to leave this to peripatetic commissioners.

The local government commission will form its own view on the basis of local geography, local loyalty and, most important, the views of local people. Rutland may live again, but so may the great municipal boroughs, and so may the homely rural district councils. Mr Heseltine rightly said that in this age of "enabling" authorities, of tendering and sub-contracting, there really is no relationship between effectiveness and size in local government. That principle should be engraved on the commission's letter-head.

The new councils, whether entirely new or old ones reborn, must be compelled to take a different form. The archaic executive committee system, utterly unsuited to modern management, is clearly doomed. Whether there should be separately elected mayors, or town managers, or new electoral procedures, remains "for consultation." Good — let the debate commence. But Mr Heseltine rightly demands as an objective that the vigour of local politics and the accountability of local administration be restored.

One last worry remains to be resolved by Mr Heseltine and Mr Major. The contempt for local government shown by the Tory party for 12 years appears to be ending in a genuine attempt not just to reform its finances but to revive its democratic juices. This attempt sits ill alongside the cabinet's refusal to return commercial taxation to local councils for determination, its removal of colleges from council control and its demand that Treasury control over local budgets, through capping, remains in place.

Nothing has done more to perpetuate the misbehaviour of some few councils than the knowledge that they can always blame central government for "cuts" in services, and that central government will fix their levies and bail out their crazy schemes with rebates and cushions. On Tuesday Norman Lamont put in place a grant system which left barely a sixth of local councils' income to true local option. There is no reason why this should not permit the accountability bite to remain: there is still much scope for money-wasting and local political argument. There is no scope at all if the capping powers remain in place. There is little enough if councils are relieved of any obligation to keep on good terms with local employers and investors.

The economic revival of Britain's cities, lagging so far behind that of industrial cities abroad, depends on the revival of both local autonomy and a spirit of co-operation among local political and commercial leaders. Local taxation is the lubricant of that spirit. It must be restored.

The Tory party has passed through a vale of darkness over local government. Its government has deceived its supporters; it has been high-handed, crude and ultimately foolish, grasping power to London like the worst sort of socialist nationaliser or a decrepit imperial regime irritated by disobedient colonies. Mr Major can take credit for correcting the mistake. Mr Heseltine can take credit for turning correction into constructive reform. Both must push home their advantage as consultation proceeds.

## INJUSTICE IN KUWAIT

After Kuwait's liberation there began an ugly vendetta against the Palestinians and other foreigners. The provisional government appointed by the al-Sabah dynasty was slow to reign in the anarchy which followed the eviction of the invaders. Under the cover of darkness at night, vile deeds were done. Now the threat to non-Kuwaitis has shifted from unofficial personal violence to official discrimination. Most received no rations for weeks. Many now face expulsion. Those who fled the invasion or were taken hostage in Iraq have been refused readmission. Are these harsh measures really justified?

The West is dismayed that the Kuwaitis are persecuting not only those (principally Palestinians) who had reason to sympathise with Saddam Hussein, but also innocent and bewildered labourers from all over the world. Even professionally qualified Palestinians, of whom there are tens of thousands in Kuwait, have little to look forward to there. The unskilled will fare worst. Kuwaitis have been limited to two servants per household. The rest will have to leave, somehow, for somewhere.

The natural response to the plight of these people is indignation. But it should be tempered with understanding. The world today has perhaps 15 million refugees, and tens of millions more migrant workers. Kuwait is not alone in using security to justify its pursuit of ethnic homogeneity. Australia, for example, has always been reluctant to accept oriental races while encouraging European immigration. Much criticised abroad, it was a policy which played well at home. Japan has kept immigrants out for three decades. No Western nation can point the finger at Kuwait without a pang of conscience.

Kuwait's position is unenviable. The Palestinians strongly supported Saddam

Hussein. Kuwait suffered savagery bordering on genocide. The basis on which this mercantile state tolerated such a large proportion of Palestinians before the invasion has irretrievably broken down. Other Arab states will not welcome another 100,000 or more Palestinians from Kuwait to add to the thousands of others who remain stateless, though some exodus is inevitable.

Other foreign workers are not under the same suspicion. Most have passports and need not become international vagrants. Kuwaitis who have jobs to offer foreigners should not be overruled by their government, provided they can vouch for their employees. Palestinians against whom there is no evidence of pro-Iraqi sympathies should be allowed to stay in Kuwait.

What, however, if the replacements for the Kuwaiti ministers who resigned this week prove intransigent on these points? Should Britain, America and the other allies try to force the recently restored al-Sabah family to treat its foreign subjects more humanely? Unfortunately they cannot. The war was fought to restore the sovereignty of Kuwait. The West cannot undermine that sovereignty by denying the new government the right to decide on internal policy. That would merely justify accusations that Kuwait has become an American puppet.

Television and the press have a right and indeed a duty to investigate abuses of human rights in Kuwait, as they have to investigate as far as they can the more inaccessable crimes still being committed in Iraq. Western governments may influence the al-Sabahs in the direction of democracy and toleration. But the West should not seek forcibly to remake the Middle East in its own image, not even in Kuwait. Whatever the temptations, Western statesmen must show that imperialism really is dead.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. Telephone 071-782 5000

### Appeal judges called to account

*From Sir Michael Davies*  
Sir, Your leading article, "Blaming Lord Lane" (March 19), touches incidentally upon the retiring age for judges — presently 75 in the High Court and above, 72 for circuit judges.

Experience at the Bar and on the Bench has convinced me that all judges should give up full-time judging at 70. Of course, there are plenty of judges over that age who are ideally fitted to continue to sit; they could be invited to do so on an ad hoc basis. If any were deemed to be "over the top" — and I am not referring to any presently sitting judge — they could be quietly stood down, which is rightly not possible with a full-time judge.

Until the 1950s there was no retiring age for the higher judiciary. No doubt of that. It is the end of the anguish and misery of their relatives and friends and of a great number of right-thinking citizens. But is it "end of story" for the men themselves? May it not be the beginning of a long and distressing experience of rehabilitation no less traumatic than their incarceration itself?

I wish Mr Hadfield and his team luck in their attempt to discover the actual bombers of 1974. But I wish greater success to the commission that the Home Secretary sets up to investigate the whole judicial system. Let it take its time and do it in depth. And let it give due consideration to such off-the-cuff remarks as those of the chief constable of the West Midlands.

Yours faithfully,  
MICHAEL DAVIES,  
Lincoln's Inn, WC2,  
March 20.

*From Professor Emeritus Werner von Simson*

Sir, An increasing amount of our law is now European Community law, binding on all irrespective of nationality. It is therefore natural that constitutional lawyers in our countries should compare the different legal systems in order to see what can be learned from them. As for the English system, there is much to be admired and some to be criticised. What is beyond question is the hard-won independence of judges.

To demand the removal of individual judges on grounds not of insanity or corruption but because their personal character fails to live up to the expectations of an ill-tempered and ill-mannered journalist is plainly endangering this independence. Let us remember that the National Socialist press in Hitler's Germany systematically undermined the integrity of judges by similar slights on their personal reputation.

A judge should not have to look over his shoulder to avoid the disapproval of his person rather than of his judgments. Mr Bernard Levin (March 18) does no service to the judicial system by suggesting otherwise. He should know more about the role of the judge in criminal cases than he evidently does. Why is it "shameful" and "arrogant" to accept evidence submitted by the police of one's country as unlikely to have been criminally falsified in a way hitherto unheard of?

The scandal lies with this deception, not with the jury who was deceived by it. Nor does it lie with the judges who failed to suspect that the police were capable of such action. As for the scientific evidence, it took long and very advanced research to disprove it.

Judges of the standing of Lord Bridge and Lord Lane may displease some politicians or writers. They have the right to say so. But the judge should not be attacked as a person, least of all in the name of improving the English legal system. I am, Sir, yours faithfully,  
WERNER VON SIMSON,  
Luisenstrasse 3,  
D-7800 Freiburg 1, Germany.

### NHS compromise

*From Dr A. N. Banaji*

Sir, The enormous variations in contract prices offered to general practitioners by hospitals are absurd, as you report (March 11), and are a clear indication of the indecent haste of introduction of the NHS reforms. Nevertheless the success as a system of the NHS internal market is dependent on some financial competition. The system would be unnecessary if hospitals entered price-fixing cartels. As a corollary, in a free internal market any hospital which cannot quite compete will have to close.

Faced with the prospect of large numbers of bankrupt hospitals the nation has a choice. The hospitals could close, which would cause

*From Dr D. C. Barrett, SJ*  
Sir, Ronald Hadfield, chief constable of the West Midlands, was reported by you today as saying when asked whether he had changed his mind about the freed Birmingham Six: "Those six men are innocent. End of story."

This — to say the least — is an ambiguous reply. How does he know that they are innocent? That is at most a reasonable assumption from all the evidence that has come to light, but no more. But even if their innocence (as distinct from the lack of proof of their guilt) has been established, what does Hadfield mean by "End of story"?

It is mercifully the end of the unjust and fraudulent incarceration. No doubt of that. It is the end of the anguish and misery of their relatives and friends and of a great number of right-thinking citizens. But is it "end of story" for the men themselves? May it not be the beginning of a long and distressing experience of rehabilitation no less traumatic than their incarceration itself?

I wish Mr Hadfield and his team luck in their attempt to discover the actual bombers of 1974. But I wish greater success to the commission that the Home Secretary sets up to investigate the whole judicial system. Let it take its time and do it in depth. And let it give due consideration to such off-the-cuff remarks as those of the chief constable of the West Midlands.

Yours faithfully,  
D. C. BARRETT,  
University of Warwick,  
Department of Philosophy,  
Coventry,  
West Midlands,  
March 16.

*From his Honour Lyall Wilkes*

Sir, The judge's oath is to do justice "according to the evidence". He has no magic x-ray eye to decide what is true evidence and what is false — that is the jury's province, under direction as to credibility. But if evidence has been dishonestly tampered with, and if both the prosecution and the defence fail to bring the tampering out into the open during the trial, the judge just as much as the accused is the victim of that failure.

Yours faithfully,  
LYALL WILKES,  
The Gin-Gin,  
Ogle, Newcastle upon Tyne,  
March 17.

*From Mr R. A. Adcock*

Sir, The conviction of the so-called Birmingham Six having been quashed, they must now be presumed innocent. As innocent they are innocent victims of the IRA atrocity in Birmingham, along with all those killed, maimed or bereaved, with whom they should now have some fellow-feeling.

They would not have become involved in a protracted dispute with our legal system had that original atrocity not taken place. Therefore, when it comes to compensation, this ought to be related to the compensation paid to other innocent victims.

Should they get more than the maximum paid to any of the others (and I have no idea how much that might have been) this would be seen as a further miscarriage of justice.

Yours faithfully,  
R. A. ADCOCK,  
The Barn, North Sidborough,  
Louth, Leicestershire,  
Devon,  
March 17.

mayhem. Or they could be bailed out; but this would negate the whole principle of the internal market and indeed render it unnecessary — a sad thought given the billions spent on its introduction.

Either way the patient's interest has been poorly served. The underlying problem is that proper quality standards are incompatible with the money available. We have to compromise on one or the other and it is time people and politicians realised this.

I remain, Sir, your disillusioned servant,  
ANDREW RAMJI  
(Consultant Rheumatologist),  
Fragrant Centre for Medical Studies,  
Queen Mary's Hospital,  
Sidcup, Kent,  
March 11.

the capital, and indeed throughout the country, and to begin a programme of repainting it in the colours with which Georgian ironwork sparkled: blue, green, white and gold being the most common?

How much more handsome would our gates and railings look repainted in these colours than in their mournful Victorian black.

I remain, Sir, yours etc.,  
CHARLES TRUMAN,  
67 Colville Lane,  
Fulham, SW6,  
March 18.

*Journal (vol. 106, 1945).* Oliver made careful daily observations of the frequency and intensity of dust storms throughout the war at Burg el 'Arab, a village some 30 miles west of Alexandria. He found that such storms increased in frequency in proportion to the extent of military activity in the Western Desert and that by 1945 their frequency had fallen to pre-war levels.

More recently Egyptian meteorologists have told me that similar effects can be observed on a more local scale whenever building construction, for example for an airfield or new town, takes place on an area of previously undisturbed desert. It is considered or badly executed agricultural extension, even with irrigation, can have the same effect. Fortunately the evidence suggests that nature can rapidly restore the balance once such activity ceases.

Yours faithfully,  
C. G. SMITH,  
235 Woodstock Road,  
Oxford,  
March 14.

Letters to the editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — (071) 782 5046.

### Halting decline of British shipping

*From the Executive Officer, National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers*

Sir, Lord Sterling's plea for state aid to the shipping industry (March 13) is like that of the professional burglar complaining that his house has been ransacked.

Since 1979, the government, and shipowners like Lord Sterling who support it, have had every opportunity to introduce measures to halt the decline. Despite representations from seafaring unions, academics, opposition parties and even warnings from the all-party House of Commons Defence Committee, they have done nothing.

Instead, the industry has been offered no more than a host of de-regulatory measures designed to encourage "British" shipowners to register their vessels in a variety of de-facto offshore tax havens and sack UK seafarers in favour of low-cost and often exploited crews from the Third World.

The facts speak for themselves. Since this government took office, nearly 800 ships have been lost from the UK register and over 40,000 seafaring jobs have disappeared, with no apparent protest from Lord Sterling and the shipowners he represents.

The result has been a massive loss to the UK balance of payments, a worrying gap in our defences and a dramatic increase in shipping casualties as crews and the marine environment pay the de-regulatory price.

The National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers does support the employers' call for state aid to the shipping industry and regrets the Chancellor's failure in this Budget to meet it. But let the taxpayer beware — aid should be conditional on its recipients registering their vessels in the UK, building them in UK yards and employing UK seafarers.

I look forward to meeting Lord

Sterling to discuss the re-employment of those British seafarers whose cause he now eloquently espouses.

Yours faithfully,  
SAM McCLUSKIE,  
Executive Officer,  
National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers,  
Maritime House, Old Town, SW4.

*From Mr Mike Stevens*

Sir, I was encouraged to read Lord Sterling's letter in which he summarised the proposed government incentives for shipowners in order to halt the decline of the British merchant fleet. He has set out the powerful and, to my mind, unarguable case for revitalising the merchant service.

Since the government has been pleasantly surprised by the recently published figures for invisible earnings, this may be a propitious time to say something on behalf of the British seafarer.

Prospective candidates for the position of both officer and rating need encouragement to embark upon a career at sea. The job has always held danger but the incidence of ship and crew loss in recent years, largely brought about by poorly maintained and poorly manned ships, has hardly been a good advertisement for a career at sea.

Long hours of work and prolonged absence from home are other reasons why the British seafarer has, over the past ten years, taken the view that he has a better deal working ashore. The training colleges around the country are doing their best to promote the merchant service as a worthwhile career; however, I fear they face an uphill struggle.

Yours etc.,  
MIKE STEVENS,  
Marlow House,  
Lloyds Avenue, EC3,  
March 15.

### Air routes dispute

*From the Chief Executive of British Airways*

Sir, In his letter of March 14 Mr Branson writes misleadingly about the transfer of landing slots at Narita airport, Tokyo.

British Airways is large only compared to other UK airlines. Compared to the foreign carriers which are its principal international competitors, including the huge and commercially powerful US airlines, it is small. United Airlines and American Airlines each have fleets of aircraft more than twice the size of that of British Airways.

British Airways faces greater competition at Heathrow than do the major foreign international carriers at their main domestic base airports. Its market share of international passengers at the airports serving London is only one third — substantially less than the comparable shares of its main rivals at their main bases.

It is correct that increased frequencies of services between this country and Japan were made available to UK carriers following government negotiations with Japan last year and these were equally divided between British Airways and Virgin Atlantic.

British Airways had slots available to operate these frequencies but Virgin Atlantic did not. Virgin Atlantic then successfully petitioned to restrict the number of flights which could be operated by British Airways so that Virgin Atlantic could use British Airways' slots. British Airways will thus have to reduce its services to Tokyo.

British Airways' entitlement to

slots at Narita exist by virtue of many years' operation and investment in that market. We object to the confiscation of that entitlement without compensation.

Yours faithfully,  
COLIN MARSHALL,  
Deputy Chairman and  
Chief Executive,  
British Airways Plc,  
PO Box 10,  
Heathrow Airport (London),  
Hounslow, Middlesex.

*From Mr R. G. H. Morris*

Sir, There are likely to be many shareholders like myself in British Airways who feel that the secretary of state for transport has done considerably less than might have been expected of him in the recent air-routes negotiations with the USA, and that he has not sustained the opportunities outlined in the prospectus at the time of the offer for sale (privatisation) of BA in 1987.

At least BA has met, and exceeded, the demands of both international and domestic competition, whilst remaining both accountable and responsible to its shareholders. Since Mr Branson withdrew his company from the stock market, he can make the sort of statement in his letter today without being accountable to shareholders of his own — and certainly not to those members of the travelling public who are proud to be members of British Airways. He should not push his luck too far.

Yours faithfully,  
ROBIN MORRIS,  
Rushford, Melling,  
Carnforth, Lancashire,  
March 13.

### All that jazz

*From Mr John Mendes*

Sir, Many years ago the Dave Brubeck Quartet recorded a thing called *Take Five* which mysteriously got into the pop charts. Fans of Brubeck-style jazz tore their hair and rent their garments at the thought of the great unwashed public actually enjoying their kind of music.

David Blamey (March 16) gives me the impression that he sees popular jazz as bad jazz. It is that attitude which has reduced modern jazz to an arid chamber music produced by performers whose egos and undoubted mechanical technique cannot compensate for their lack of musical creativity.

Jazz was never meant to be a serious contemporary music force — if I may quote Mr Blamey. It was meant to be fun.

Yours faithfully,  
JOHN MENDES,  
1 Lower Street,  
Caversham,  
Suffolk,  
March 17.

### Easily sold

*From Mrs Melissa Hawes*

Sir, Public relations (despite its own bad press) can be successful but there must be some intrinsic worth in a client. I would therefore respectfully after Mr Bateman's definition (March 20) to "a squirrel is simply a rat with a long, appealing, bushy tail and good public relations".

Yours faithfully,  
MELISSA G. HAWES  
(Account Executive),  
Andrea Marks Public Relations,  
Laburnum House,  
1 Spring Villa Road,  
Edgware, Middlesex,  
March 21.

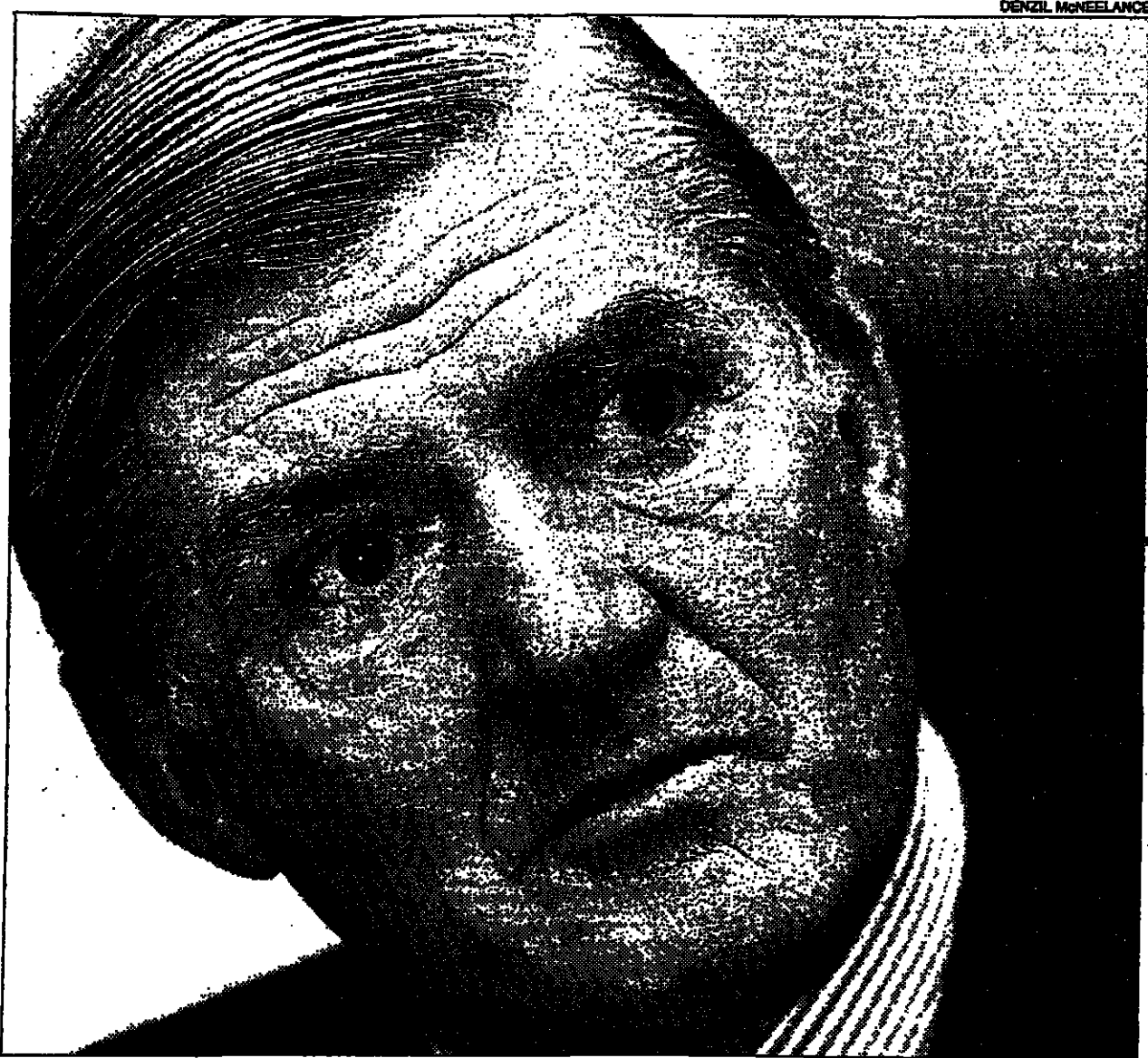












A view of the future: Cecil Parkinson, chairman of a new right-wing think-tank and, after the next election, a former MP

## A good look at Parkinson's lore

If there is reincarnation," Cecil Parkinson says, "I wish I could return short, fat and ugly." He is lamenting, over a dry vermouth in the Commons bar, that good looks are not necessarily a good thing in a man. He is disappointed that the political pundits have referred to him as a "bit of a lightweight", alleging his charm kept him in Margaret Thatcher's favour and her cabinet. "Just because you're tall and well-dressed, people think that's the only reason for your success," he wails. For Mr Parkinson perceives himself to be more of a thinker than a looker. For that reason, he became chairman of Conservative Way Forward (CWF), the right-wing think-tank launched yesterday, and is dedicating himself to keeping the vision of Thatcherism alive in the Nineties.

Mr Parkinson's way forward came to an abrupt halt with the arrival of John Major at 10 Downing Street. He had backed two wrong horses in the leadership challenge, Mrs Thatcher and subsequently Michael Heseltine, and found himself on the back benches after resigning as transport

Kate Muir meets Cecil Parkinson, the former transport secretary, and finds a man unhappy with his image

secretary. The only shred of comfort to be gained is that he knows exactly how Mrs Thatcher feels.

"It was quite a traumatic experience for me to be driven home one day by my driver at six o'clock, and not set eyes on him again, but for someone like Mrs Thatcher, who spent two previous days on probably the greatest disarmament signing since the war, someone who—I don't think it is an exaggeration to say—was a pivotal world figure... To go from that must have been the most tremendous shock."

Mr Parkinson confides that he thinks she has been very strong and is coming out of it rather well, but he would not like to see all her good works go to waste. Neither would Norman Tebbit, Lord Joseph, John Moore, Sir George Gardiner and Patrick Minford, the free market since they have all paid their £20 to CWF, as will many who supported Mrs Thatcher in the

leadership battle. Mrs Thatcher is also keeping her hand in, in the background, and has agreed to become the CWF's president. "My own view is she's trying to say that she cares very deeply about the party, and like any mother she doesn't want the party to go off the rails," Mr Parkinson says. Hence the two high-profile American television interviews, coming conveniently just before the Major-Kohl summit. Mr Parkinson considers it to be a coincidence. "She believes very strongly in the threat of German domination, and she's said so very loudly before. Anyway, it produced no waves in Germany because they knew what she felt." What about his and the CWF's views? "I'm not a federalist," he says, vaguely.

You cannot be too careful in the world of politics. "Of course, I feel very much in tune with John Major about this," Mr Parkinson says. "I believe in a gradual convergence, giving people the option of the hard end. You can't impose a single currency on a range of countries with such diverse economies."

Almost all the CWF's views, it turns out, are in tune with Mr Major's. Why bother to set it up at all, then? "It wasn't a question that Mrs Thatcher had gone and the new people might not be quite so trustworthy. We just wanted a right-of-centre group to argue the case for the things we believe in, like the Tory Reform Group does, or the Bow Group. A sort of counterbalance."

He claims that many of the CWF's supporters, who also include members of the Thatcherite No Turning Back group, are very much part of the government orthodoxy. "We are not some beleaguered minority shouting plaintively from out of the darkness," Mr Parkinson says, tucking into the canapés.

There is a slightly beleaguered feeling coming from the former party chairman, transport secretary, energy secretary and trade and industry secretary. It is uncomfortable in the wings. Mr Parkinson's office has been farmed out to Dean's Yard, a pleasant quadrangle by Westminster Abbey, but definitely outside the House of Commons. "I've got quite a nice room... and it's lovely seeing the Westminster choirboys."

On the way across to the bar, he is willingly buttonholed by a television reporter for a few soundbites in the sheep pen for media-hungry MPs. "Is that that Neil Parkinson?" says a spotty boy. "Nah, it's Cecil Parkinson," says his girlfriend. "He's the one that had that thing with Sara Keays."

He says his resignation over that in 1983 was the worst point in his political career. "It was very traumatic." Just before then, people were talking about him as the golden boy, a possible successor to Mrs Thatcher. He had been in the war cabinet during the Falklands campaign. "That was a marvellous achievement by the British force, comparable to the Gulf."

There are other political achievements he wants to mention, the recent success of electricity privatisation being a particular delight, following his rather rough time as energy secretary. But transport, his last post, was a stinker. He picked up the tail end of the King's Cross and Lockerbie enquiries, and dealt with the Clapham rail crash. It is hard to do right. As Paul Channon, his predecessor, once said: "The transport secretary is the only person who believes in a gradual convergence, giving people the option of the hard end. You can't impose a single currency on a range of countries with such diverse economies."

Otherwise, Mr Parkinson has been lucky in his appointments. In fact, he thinks people put it down too much to luck and good looks rather than to hard work.

*'We are not some minority shouting from out of the darkness'*

Was he lucky to win a scholarship to grammar school? Was he lucky to get to Cambridge? Was he lucky to start his own business? Was he lucky to become party chairman? It's a hell of a lot of luck on a consistent basis, but people always want to find an unflattering reason for the fact that you have done well.

The public will be able to confirm this fact by reading Mr Parkinson's modest autobiography, on which he will soon start work. Although he is stepping down from his Hertsmere, Hertfordshire, seat at the next election, to return to the business world, the CWF membership will ensure his finger is still poking around in the pie.

Mr Parkinson is enjoying his last stint at the Commons. Everything is more relaxed, and he has time for his family, attending the opera and skiing, wearing, he reveals, a royal blue tight one-piece ski-suit. "People keep coming up to me, saying, 'Cecil, how healthy you look.' He clearly does not fear there is a haggard portrait of him lurking, Dorian Gray-style, in his attic.

## Mr Lamont's wrong number

Far from being the scourge of modern life, the portable phone is its saviour

A CHANCELLOR cannot be grudging a joke or two; and some of Mr Lamont's were well up to the standard of his excellent comedy eyebrows. But I wish he had not joined the tedious, thoughtless fogey chorus by denouncing portable telephones as one of "the greatest scourges of modern life". I suppose there is some comfort in the reflection that when a Chancellor of the Exchequer starts using a joke it proves the joke is nearly dead; but still I ground my teeth.

Denouncers of portable telephones are, on the whole, a pain in the neck: effete Spectatorish aesthetes whose lives are led within a circuit of smart urban restaurants, or jealous middle-aged duffers who refuse to learn to work videos. They love to hate the "ghastly little people" who make calls from restaurant tables and buffet cars; never mind that one's lunch can be as comprehensively ruined by, say, an office birthday party at the next table. So surely nobody can object to the taxing of yuppie-phones? Warm laughter met the Chancellor's sally, and universal approbation dropped around him like a dragnet.

Not from me, it didn't. Portable telephones are one of the great advances of the century, and should be robustly encouraged. The price should tumble, the networks quadruple and everyone should have one. They are a saviour, not a scourge.

Consider contemporary Britain: miles of brutal concrete, motorway interchanges impassable to pedestrians and miles from any human habitation, vandalised city centres. We have a crumbling public transport system coupled with social fragmentation, family break-ups, commuter lives and shifting employment patterns which create an ever-more-urgent need for business and private travel. A great army of sales reps, service staff and transport drivers is necessary to keep up the pretence of straggling Britain being one compact community: huge numbers of us spend half our lives on the road. Only the ability to talk to base can humanise this life. A delivery driver arrived at our house recently having learnt in a Suffolk lane that his wife was in premature labour in west Cornwall. At least he knew, and could talk to her in privacy.

IF YOU are on a stuck bus three miles from where your children are being hustled out of school; if you are on the A45 in freezing fog on a fool's errand because your meeting at Bury St Edmunds has been cancelled; if you are late, lost, broken down at night on a motorway with a baby in the back, or have merely forgotten to write down the address of your next client—what can save the day?

And do you care, at that point, if complacent old men in the Savoy Grill think you are a scourge?

LIBBY PURVES  
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# PAIN

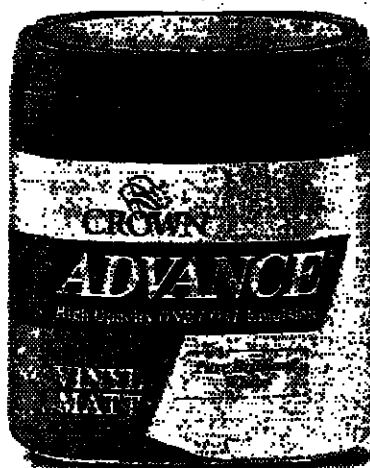
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CONCERTS

# Happy meeting of minds

THE problematic three As of the Barbican Centre — its architecture, acoustics and atmosphere — may not enhance the making of great concerts. But on two consecutive evenings this week the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the London Symphony Orchestra proved that with the right conductor and soloists, miracles are possible.

Andrew Litton, conducting the Royal Philharmonic on Tuesday, is not a particularly exciting man to watch — the beat is clear but somewhat stolid — so one can only assume that his ability to bring out the best in an orchestra rests on rehearsal technique and personality.

He had begun with a confidently swaggering reading of Elgar's overture *In the South*, the brass and woodwind obviously warming to their task, and the strings also sounding unusually sweet. Perhaps their concentration had been focused by the thought of the challenge of Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra* after the interval. That was a challenge, heroically met, not only in terms of technical finesse but in the highly charged flavour of the performance. Uncomfortable though one might be with the Nietzschean premise of this piece, here it beguiled irresistibly.

At the heart of the evening, however, lay Bernadette Greevy's singing of Mahler's *Kinderlieder*. This was a concentrated and emotionally powerful performance, the voice strong, penetrating and dark, the orchestral part tailored beautifully to the flexible contours of Greevy's lines. Christopher Cowie's delicately expressive oboe playing, and the superb control of the horns as the last song approached its final stillness, were both particularly impressive.

Something of Greevy's rapt involvement also characterised Marian Lipovsek's performance in Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*.



Right man: Andrew Litton

*Lied von der Erde* the following evening when the London Symphony Orchestra was obviously on its mettle under Sir Georg Solti's vibrant direction, as a sharp performance of Mozart's Symphony No 40 had already suggested. Lipovsek's voice is the most glorious of instruments, and she used the full range of its colours, in the final song, "Der Abschied", to moving effect.

Marvellous though she was, the tenor, Philip Langridge, was far from upstaged, though Mahler's orchestration in the first song, "Das Trinklied vom Jammer der Erde" as usual proved overwhelming. His voice has its own soaring glories, and he judged his drunken characterisation in "Der Trunkene im Frühling" to perfection.

STEPHEN PETTITT

GALLERIES: ROYAL

# Magpie monarch's treasure

George IV filled his now-demolished London palace with magnificent art.

Joseph Connolly previews a show of its glories at Buckingham Palace

Carlton House was an unexceptional building in Pall Mall when it was granted to George, Prince of Wales, on his coming of age in 1783. But he immediately set about transforming his London palace into one of the most fabulous in Europe, lavishing vast sums of money upon its extension and decoration, and filling each of its rooms with outstanding works of art.

George's devotion to this task was never in dispute, but he was a restless refurbisher, constantly altering, refitting, cancelling hugely expensive commissions and cannibalising recently installed fittings.

Over a period of nearly 40 years he would repeatedly announce the endeavour complete, only to consign all of the chinoiserie to the Brighton Pavilion, change cloth of gold to crimson and back again, order all the silver to be gilded, or commission new carpets to be woven. Finally, in 1827 — just three years before his death — the king decided that Carlton House was after all too small for his purpose. He ordered its demolition, insisting that his transfer of the contents and most of the fittings to his new twin palaces, Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle, be seen as a rigorous exercise in economy.

These two royal residences supply almost all the exhibits for the latest in a series of exhibitions at the Queen's Gallery, each devoted to a single aspect of the Royal Collection. From the initial blood-stirring impact of a magnificent collection of largely English early 19th-century silver-gilt tableware (from vast, beaten sideboard plates to wine labels), one is immediately aware that here is a collection to be marvelled at.

All this gliding is brilliantly lit against a deep royal blue ground, and housed within a central crimson tented display case, tasselled in gold and surrounded by finials. No less

dazzling is a French drop-front secrétaire of around 1755, ebonyed and gilded with six earlier black and gold Japanese lacquer panels — one of several similar pieces, each carrying vast and noble 18th-century Chinese porcelain and bronze ewers, or deep-blue and gold Sevres chinoiserie pot-pourri vases.

Splendid late 18th-century English pedestals in the Egyptian taste hold up no less fine gilded candelabra. All these pieces are flanked by luminously bright paintings by Rubens, and overhung by a superb full-length Gainsborough portrait and the most spectacular of George IV's many fine Dutch paintings, Rembrandt's "The Ship-builder and his Wife", (1633).

A pair of strict yet fluent canvases by Stubbs sing out, as do many small and captivating Dutch oils.

Surprising, too, are the typically rural conversation pieces by David Wilkie and a beautiful if sentimental Greuze, but they all successfully combine to convey George IV's tastes for 17th-century Dutch genre and 18th-century French painting, as well as British contemporaries.

Obsessive though he was, George IV undoubtedly had a fine eye, and within the context of furnishing a monarch's palace he did little wrong. The famous portrait of him by Sir Thomas Lawrence monumentally dominates the room: the most compulsive royal decorator in the history of the monarchy seems serene, and yet not so much majestic as downright cocky in his rasper, and cream coronation robes, gazing down upon this potent reconstruction of a small part of what one visitor of 1813 described as "Mahomet's Paradise".

Carlton House: The Past Glories of George IV's Palace opens today at The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, London SW1 (071-930 4832). Until January 1992.



Dominating: Sir Geoffrey de Bellaine, director of the Royal Collection, stands before the Lawrence portrait of George IV, whose taste is celebrated in the show

GALLERIES: COMMERCIAL

# The young tell strange stories

In Victorian times, painters mostly held that every picture should tell a story that was usually "public property": something from history, myth or currently popular literature. For nearly a century now, that sort of story-telling has been out of style. But with the present resurgence of figurative painting in Britain, it seems to be back.

In the work of several young painters at present showing in commercial London galleries the public part of the story-telling is, admittedly, much played down. Painters today are more likely to refer to private myths. Or, if the elements in the story are readily recognisable, they are used in a way that deliberately undermines familiarity. Laura Ford, for instance (whose show of works on paper at Smith-Jarvis precedes two bigger shows in May, at the Riverside Centre and at Benjamin Rhodes), is clearly obsessed by certain childhood images: Thomas the Tank Engine occurs in many of her paintings, and a dangerous-looking Orphan Annie character packing pistols is featured in both painting and sculpture.

Even these familiar creatures, however, are loaded with private significance. Thomas becomes a model of the insensitive, confident person who just barrels through complex situations, while the little girl with the guns signifies the dangerous violence that a child usually cloaks in practical impotence. Jellies and trifles run riot in Ford's menacing nursery world; flowers grow luscious fleshy tongues, although what they say with them lacks clarity and coherence. But the pictures do stand up independently, teasing spectators to react.

The jewel-like paintings of Gary Anderson, a young Glaswegian having his first London show at Ewan Mundy & Celia Philo, are very different from Ford's poster-like images, yet he clearly inhabits the same imaginative realms.

In his case, a fascination with circuses and sideshows is obvious, allied to an aggressive nostalgia that finds expression in deliciously odd collages and constructions.

He too weaves stories about his characters: the Tin-Tin look-alike who has fantastic adventures; the tough-looking young woman whose eye-patch gives her a faintly piratical air. His works are exquisitely detailed, much more like that other Glaswegian odd-man-out, John Quinlan Fringle, than any of Anderson's more political Glasgow contemporaries. He is a real original, with great communicative skills.

There is more oddity, and a hidden agenda, in the recent work of Sara Rossberg (Thumb Gallery). A German who has lived in Britain since 1976, Rossberg is usually counted among the British hyper-realists. As she practises a finely detailed surface realism, that is not unfair. But there is much more than that. Her figure-unpacked paintings invite the spectator to extract, or invent, a drama. What links these disparate characters? Why are they together and yet looking in various directions?

In much of her earlier work the paint was thinly applied, in acrylic's closest approximation to washes of pale colour. But recently she has begun to lay on more and more paint, until the surface becomes almost sculptural. Another question: how on earth does she get the painting of a woolly garment to assume so closely the texture of the real thing?

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

Laura Ford, Smith-Jarvis, 2 Telford Place, SE15 (071-701 5861) Wed-Sat 12-6, to April 6. Gary Anderson, Ewan Mundy & Celia Philo, 29 New Bond Street, W1 (071-499 2516), Mon-Fri 10-5.30, to March 28. Sara Rossberg, Thumb Gallery, 38 Lexington Street, W1 (071-439 7343) Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat 11-4, to March 29.

RECORDS: ROCK

# This is from the heart

JULIAN Cope became convinced by a recent "vision" that the earth is on the brink of an ecological holocaust. His response was to write and record Peggy Suekide, a 76-minute warning in sandwich-board slogans of the end of the world as we know it and protest at the horrors of life in poll-tax blighted Britain (albeit rather late in the day).

This is an unusually coherent theme for Cope, at least compared with the acid-spiked meandering of much of his previous work. Traditionally more a hippie recidivist than a politician, his newly acquired campaigning zeal injects a sense of mission into his music where most previous stimulants have failed.

The album is teeming with invention and stacked with vibrant contrasts, such as the switch from the biting "Hanging Out & Hung Up on the Line" to the quiet menace

Julian Cope: Peggy Suekide (Island CID 8977). Paul Brady: Trick or Treat (Fontana 848 454-2). Susanna Hoffs: When You're a Boy (Columbia 487202 2).

of "Safesurfer" (about AIDS). His baritone voice at times resembling Phil Oakley's plummy drawl, at others Jim Morrison's angry growl, Cope whacks through this extended polemic with unwavering conviction and rare passion.

In terms of musicianly accomplishment Paul Brady knocks Julian Cope into a cocked hat, but whereas Cope's album has a spontaneous sparkle, the songs on Brady's Trick or Treat have been burnished to bland perfection. Brady is an Irish songwriter and singer, once a member of hardline traditional folk group Planxty, though that would not be guessed from the easy-list-

ening rock he now purveys. Trick or Treat was produced by Gary Katz (known for his work with Steely Dan) and recorded in America. It might appeal to the "quality" rock market dominated by Chris Rea, but so effectively has any trace of Brady's personality been wrung out of this work, that it has been rendered completely soulless.

Susanna Hoffs was the good-looking one in the Bangles, a group which injected an offbeat charm into an otherwise typical West-Coast pop formula. Iron out the pleasing idiosyncrasies, substitute a sultry post and you have Hoffs's solo debut, When You're a Boy. Apart from David Bowie's "Boys Keep Swinging" (from the chorus of which the album's title is taken), this is an airbrushed exercise in boredom.

DAVID SINCLAIR

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**CHANNEL 4**

- 6.00 The Channel Four Daily 9.25 Schools
- 12.00 The Parliament Programme with Sue Cameron
- 12.30 Business Start: News and analyses of from the financial world
- 1.00 Sesame Street: Educational fun for pre-school children
- 2.00 The Complete Star! First programme in the series (r)
- 2.30 Channel 4 Racing from Doncaster, introduced by Brough Scott
- 3.00 Live coverage of the 2.45, 3.15, 3.45 and 4.15 races
- 4.00 Countdown: Another round of the words and numbers game
- 5.00 Not On Survey! includes the results of a survey on the state of Britain's cathedrals
- 5.30 Sumo, Japanese wrestling series
- 5.30 History Days: A stage American high school comedy series
- 6.30 Tomorrow with Jonathan Ross: The guests are television designer Helen Storey and Bill Snerghoff. At 7.15 the model for the new Wangan advert



**Co-hosts: Richard Madeley and Judy Fioneagan (10.40a)**

**A global cultural exchange: Robert Rauschenberg (B, 20mm)**

their foster children 1.50 A Country Practice. Drama set in an Australian community  
 2.20 Thames Action. Yv Taylor Gae and Jacqui King go on the road to investigate motor accidents 2.05 2.00 Jingo, Quiz programme hosted by Jeff Stevenson. With guests Leslee Crowther and Adrian Wain  
 3.15 ITN News headlines 3.20 Thames News headlines 3.25 The Youth Doctors. Australian soap following the torments of patients and staff at a large city hospital  
 3.55 Ask Odo. Big Odo and his friends solve environmental issues 4.15 Warner Brothers Cartoon 4.30 Fun House. Sitcom game show presented by Pat Sharp 5.00 Warner Brothers Cartoon  
 5.10 Home and Away (r)  
 5.40 News with Carol Barnes (Oracle) Weather  
 6.00 B.C. (Oracle) Frank, Slooth and Joanne Sheldon are joined by Michael Patel and Danni Menoque  
 6.55 The Day. A day in the life of David, a member of the Gateway Club for the mentally handicapped  
 7.00 The \$64,000 Question. Bob Monkhouse smirks and jokes his way through the questions in this game show that tests the powers of memory and great contestants the chance to win £5,000  
 7.30 Coronation Street. (Oracle)  
 8.00 Surprise Surprise. Clive Black hosts the show that springs surprise, makes drama come true and, for one reason or another brings tears to the eyes of viewers and participants alike (Oracle)  
 9.00 The Trials of Rosie O'Neill. An Act of Love. Squishty blend American drama series starring Sharon Gless as an ex-Beverly Hills lawyer turned protestant advocate Rosie's defence of a man accused of killing his partner who was suffering from Aids, gives her a new insight into the mental and physical effects of the disease (Oracle)  
 9.00 News at Ten with Trevor McDonald and Julie Somerville (Oracle) Weather 10.35 LWT News and Weather  
 10.40 The London Programme Special. Trevor Phillips introduces a special edition which takes Lord Scarman back to Brighton a decade after his ground-breaking report on the riots which cost many lives and caused the deaths of hundreds of people married. Scarman meets police, activists and young residents in order to assess for the programme what, if anything, has changed in the studio, he is joined by a panel comprising of the country's leading politicians, businessmen, educators and experts on inner city policy.  
 2.10 The Underman. John Pitter stars as the unorthodox cop plagued by personal and domestic difficulties who always seem to be making a deliberate effort to interfere with his work.  
 2.40 Dirty Dancing. Spin off from the corny box office smash  
 3.05 The James White Radio Show. Essential lessons in the art of being generally offensive without having to resort to verbal abuse  
 3.05 The Musical of Mount. Poetry presented John Hegley  
 3.35 Raw Power (Oracle)  
 3.55 Cinema/Attractions. A look at the best of the movies that are currently doing the rounds in the US  
 5.05 Six To Five with Andy Stegall and Liz Wickham  
 5.35 World Wide. Where to go what to wear and the best equipment  
 5.55 Cooking with Kurma. Kurma demonstrates his skill in the art of vegetarian cooking  
 6.30 ITN Morning News with Gill Carter. Facts at 6.00



**Granting poetic licence: Rosa with Jodorowsky (11.20pm)**

2.01am Film: *The Wrong Man* (1957, b/w).  
 ● CHOICE: Cleverly boxed into a corner by the French film director François Truffaut during the series of interviews which were subsequently turned into a celebrated book, Alfred Hitchcock glibly conceded that *The Wrong Man* should, perhaps, be listed among the indelible films of the 1950s. Truffaut, however, had identified the film's main weakness – that it wavered between documentary reconstruction and cinematic fiction. You must judge for yourself whether Truffaut was right when he suggested to Hitchcock that *The Wrong Man* would have been a far stronger film had the true story of the musician (Henry Fonda) accused of a hold-up been told in a more direct fashion. Truffaut, the cinematic parricide suspected against whom a mountain of circumstantial evidence continues to pile up

0.50 Sumo: Repeat of the programme shown at 5.30

3.00 Public Face: Private Eye. Artist and writer Ian Breckwell concludes the five-part journey through his own life. Scenes and characters are seen in retrospect in a dense montage of visual imagery. Ends at 3.25

## **Jerry Rader for Tomorrow**

[illegible]

1.00

[illegible]

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# Clarke urges emphasis on Christian education

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

SCHOOLS should devote most attention to Christianity in religious education, Kenneth Clarke, the education secretary, has insisted in a letter circulated to education officers. The government move was greeted by a Conservative MP who has headed the campaign for Christian education in schools as a significant step forward.

Michael Allison, MP for Selby, said that the letter, which follows a heated controversy over religious education in schools, was a "bombshell on local authorities".

In the letter, sent to all chief education officers in England, the education department gives a warning that a syllabus

must devote a "reasonable amount of attention to teaching based on Christian traditions". Mr Clarke, who sought legal advice, believes an agreed syllabus must give sufficient guidance to the teacher as to what Christian traditions, learning, teaching and festivals are to be taught, to stay within the law.

"The fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian would, in most cases, be properly reflected by devoting most attention to Christian traditions," the letter insists.

The new guidance comes against a backdrop of intense debate which has seen religious education rise as an area of increased concern to senior churchmen, politicians and leaders of other religions. Religious education has been declared a part of the basic, but not national, curriculum.

The government is under pressure to concede state funding for Islamic schools in the same way that Anglican and Roman Catholic schools have been funded.

Early-day motions in the present and previous parliamentary sessions have called for syllabuses to reflect the "mainly Christian" traditions in this country. More than 120 MPs signed the first, and the second already has about 70 signatures.

Mr Allison said: "It rules out thematic teaching which blurs the distinction between all religions. It also rules out the kind of syllabus which does not mention God, the Bible or Jesus Christ. Local authorities will be up-ended by this new letter of guidance, which is quite explicit and unequivocal. They would be very ill-advised to ignore this interpretation of the law, otherwise they could be taken to court."

At least two local authorities in England have agreed syllabuses which do not require Christianity. A third, Newcastle upon Tyne, was agreed by the city council after it went through a series of drafts and attracted strong criticism from parents and church leaders for being a "multi-faith mishmash" that required only one term to be spent on teaching Christianity.

Polytechnics braced, page 9

## Councils to lose control of colleges

Continued from page 1  
control. The reform falls far short of widespread changes for the financing of state education that had been forecast but will take £2 billion a year out of local authority spending.

The colleges, which will be responsible for some adult education, will be run from April 1993 by a funding council similar to that now controlling the polytechnics. Further education, tertiary and sixth-form colleges will receive an annual budget based on the number of students. Mr Clarke denied claims by Jack Straw, Labour's frontbench education spokesman, that the changes had been caused by "poll tax panic".

The National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education said it would support the establishment of the funding council if it raised the status of further education and training. Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said: "Moving further education and sixth-form colleges from local to central government control will add further confusion to a service that has suffered continuous change for the last 11 years."



Camera to canvas: the Gulf war artist, John Keane, in his London studio sorting through photographs he took on 62 rolls of film; it will take at least a year to finish any paintings based on them. (Full story, Diary, page 16)

## New-look rates to replace axed poll tax

Continued from page 1  
new tax, the government would reflect people's concern that the tax was fair. It would keep the balance between central and local taxes broadly in line with the arrangements set out in this year's Budget. There would be restraints, including continued capping, to ensure that local taxpayers

did not face excessive bills, rebate arrangements for those on low incomes and transition arrangements "to ensure that local taxpayers do not face undue changes in their bills". Mr Heseltine also said the new tax "should ensure that regional variations in property values do not lead to disproportionate bills in high-

price areas". Environment department sources suggested that some kind of banding would help to ensure that those living in a three-bedroom house in, say, Richmond, Surrey, worth three times a similar house in Richmond, Yorkshire, would not pay three times the tax. Ministers expect the av-

erage household to consist of three people, with discounts for smaller households or supplements for bigger ones. Properties are most likely to be assessed on capital values and householders themselves may do the assessing, with district valuers checking up on apparently out-of-line estimates.

### Political sketch

## After eaten words, a very mixed salad

ANY keynote speech, any poem, novel, story, career, of any consequence, turns upon a fulcrum. Somewhere concealed within it will be found a word, a passage, an episode, upon which the centre of gravity of the whole thing rests. In logic or in passion, every argument has a heart.

Yesterday's statement by the Secretary of State for the Environment was no exception. Michael Heseltine, though back on cracking form, could not escape a single phrase, buried in paragraph 40 on the fifth page of his long and closely argued statement. He had been building up to it for years. It lay there, waiting for him. He knew it was coming.

In a sense, it was the sentiment for whose expression the whole of the Opposition had been calling at prime minister's questions, minutes earlier, when they shouted "Say you're sorry! Say you're sorry!" over and over again.

It was the thing which every Tory MP dreads facing in the long months ahead at a hundred "any questions" sessions and a thousand cheese and wine parties. It was the rock which scuppered Mrs Thatcher.

As his ship approached those straits, the minister's voice was lowered and the chamber hushed. "The public," said Mr Heseltine, "have not been persuaded that the charge is fair."

"Say it again!" someone shouted. There was an enormous cheer from the Opposition. Most Tories grinned, foolishly.

The first half of Mr Heseltine's statement had been a gingerly approach to this sentence. What now remained was the painful climbing down which it entailed. He carried this off with aplomb. He almost seemed to be having fun.

For Labour, Bryan Gould had fun with his reply. To the gourmet of mixed metaphor, Mr Gould is a feast. He approaches the table of pos-

sible imagery rather as one who has paid a fixed price for a plate of salad under one of those "all you can eat for £3.95" schemes and, starting with the potato salad, finds the sauerkraut equally attractive and the bean shoots hard to resist. Though this leaves little space for the pickled beetroot, it proves impossible to pass up; as do the mushrooms, the cottage cheese, the croustons and the cauliflower dips in their turn. Only upon balancing a portion of each on his plate, does the Gouldian diner remember that he has forgotten the lettuce, tomato slices, and Thousand Island dressing. They are added. The dinner loses coherence and becomes unpalatable and unstable.

Mr Gould rose, and approached the table. This, he said, was a "complete capitulation and a 'staring U-turn' as well as 'the most shameful abandonment of principle in modern political history'". It was a "flagship, fatally holed below the waterline" but still "afloat, the hulk a danger to shipping". It "refused to lie down and die". It had taken the prime minister "through the revolving door," whereupon he had been "bounced by a leak". Still "in thrall to the monster it had created," it was now muttering into "a pig in a poke" which "put a price on the right to vote". The pig in the poke was, "a decade," "born of arrogance," and "spreading its malign influence".

But the pig, debacle, chauffeur, mutant monster or floating hulk, having completed its capitulation, shamelessly abandoned principle and accompanied Mr Major through the revolving door, and having then avoided the bouncing leak, refused to lie down.

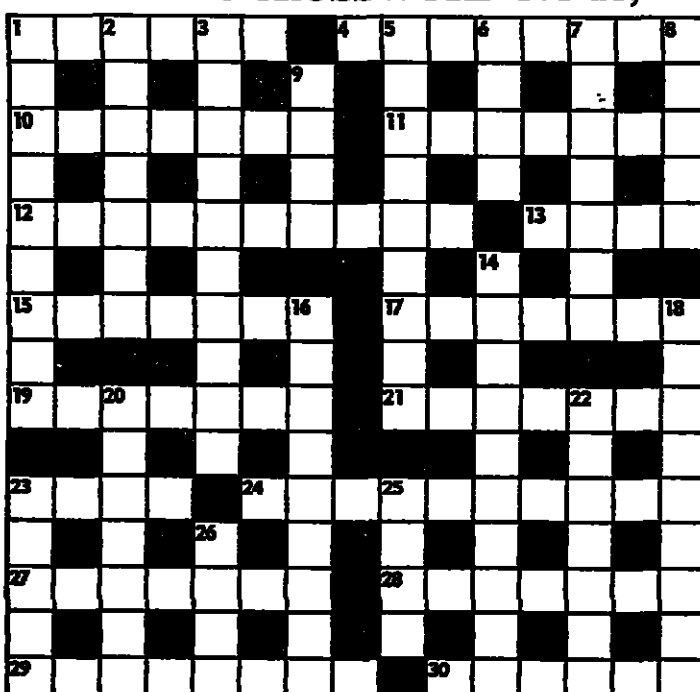
It was, said Mr Gould, "a bloodstained statement". It was a pretty bloody reply, too.

MATTHEW PARRIS

### TOMORROW IN THE TIMES

Cross words: In a funny old world for past and potential monarchs of the Commons, Alan Franks discovers Glenda Jackson, actress and Labour candidate, neither funny nor old but angry, an anger which 'reads and sounds like uncompromised rage, virgin in its purity'.  
Crossword: Tomorrow's *Listener* crossword, surviving the magazine's death, begins a new life in *The Times Saturday Review*, a perfect foil for *The Times* Crossword, which of course continues daily.  
Crosswords: Sean French visits Birmingham and discovers that the second city is as riddled with complexes as its environs are riddled with flyovers.

### THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 18,560



#### ACROSS

- 1 Banting school for cricket, perhaps (6).
- 4 Teach Tim badly about one subject (8).
- 10 End flow of stout (7).
- 11 Dogfish providing sport (7).
- 12 How to find Prime Minister in the afternoon (10).
- 13 Breezy first-class carriages etc (4).
- 15 Moving a crate can be onerous if you drop one (7).
- 17 Salesman almost mishandled complaint (7).
- 19 Does some polishing as part of army punishment (7).
- 21 Hard puzzle persistent trier is equal to (7).
- 23 Strumpet's opinion (4).
- 24 Poet and Prime Minister rule in emergency (7,3).
- 27 State a book's cover may be in (7).

#### Solution to Puzzle No 18,559

DOWN

- 2 Transient - changing immediately (9).
- 3 Support for speaker in programme on TV (4,3).
- 5 Appropriate name that's used in religious community (10).
- 6 Ring doctors after Tom begins sacrifices (9).
- 8 A hero of Communism, brothers (4).
- 7 Four or six in test? It's not important (7).
- 9 Guarded prison over a year (5).
- 8 Match reported from Asian kingdom (4).
- 14 Businessman requires better Italian on a catalogue (10).
- 16 Blow to a right-thinking person of taste (9).
- 18 Means to raise pay with honour (5,4).
- 20 Steps taken to outwit left-winger (7).
- 22 Hebridean saint about in part of Ireland (7).
- 23 Under protest, bishop's removal from service (5).
- 25 Hazard to avoid when driving carriage (4).
- 26 Thomas Carlyle's hidden blemish (4).

Concise crossword page 19

### ROADWATCH

By Philip Howard

**IMPERANCE**  
a. Impudence  
b. Lack of knowledge  
c. Wandering, errancy  
**ZIGANKA**  
a. A Russian country dance  
b. An impasse at chess  
c. A mountain bandit  
**STEPNEY**  
a. A spare wheel  
b. A furlong  
c. A police informer  
**DUKKERIPEN**  
a. A duckpond  
b. Dampening soup  
c. Fortune-telling

Answers on page 22

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### WEATHER

By Philip Howard

Scotland will have a cloudy day with showers, some heavy and wintry over hills. Northern Ireland and northern England will be brighter with scattered showers, locally heavy and wintry on high ground. Wales and the rest of England will have sunny spells and showers, locally heavy. The North-West will be windy with gales. It will feel colder everywhere. Outlook: sunny spells and showers, gradually dying out.

Midday: b-thunder; d-dizzle; l-low; s-snow; w-wind; sh-shower; f-fair; c-cloud; h-hail

Forecast for 24 hours ending 22nd March

\* denotes figures are latest available

Notes: for most destinations, forecasts only apply to the main road. Different rates apply to travel by air.

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## Owners Abroad seeks £28m

By OUR CITY STAFF

OWNERS Abroad Group, now Britain's second largest holiday operator since the demise of International Leisure Group, is raising £28.9 million, after expenses, by a two-for-five rights issue at 56p a share to fund expansion and bolster its balance sheet.

Howard Klein, the chairman, said the rate of growth in recent years and the consequent increase in the losses for the winter season meant that Owners was in technical breach of one of the covenants in its agreement with its banks. He said: "In our view, this isn't the time to be in the hands of our bankers. For the size of the business we have now become, it's clear that we are undercapitalised."

The Civil Aviation Authority also imposes financial requirements on tour operators, which the company is complying with, he added, but which made it necessary to raise capital to expand. Bookings last week were at four times their normal level.

Pre-tax profits rose 14 per cent to £15.3 million in the year to end-October. A final dividend of 2.075p makes a total up 0.4p to 2.9p. The shares dropped 1p to 70p.

Comment, page 27

## Marley falls to £14.3m in recession

By MARTIN WALLER

MARLEY, the roof tiles, bricks and blocks group, saw its pre-tax profits plunge from £56.2 million to just £14.3 million in the year to end-December, after a second-half loss. The company has been forced to pay most of its dividends out of reserves.

The group is blaming the unprecedented building recession in Britain for the loss. Some forecasts had suggested Marley would make just £10 million last year, and the shares responded with a 9p rise to 134p.

Marley is paying a final dividend of 4.25p making a total maintained at 6.35p. Cost of the dividend is £17.8 million, against attributable profits after £5.9 million of extraordinary items from disposals and closures of £3.8 million.

Christopher Beenhaim, the finance director, defended the maintained dividend, saying Marley had held payments back in previous years at times of high profitability. "We felt it would be wrong to cut it at a

time when the tide is beginning to turn."

The group was looking for a revival in housebuilding in the second half of this year. "Generally, the view of our trading management is that they are a lot more optimistic than they were a few months ago."

Pre-tax profits were held back by a £7.7 million exceptional item from redundancies and business rationalisation. As a result, in the second half it lost £1.7 million before tax, against a £21.9 million profit in the second half of 1989.

George Russell, the chairman, said: "The building recession, which has now lasted for 20 months in the United Kingdom, has severely affected our profits."

The worst result came from the bricks, blocks and paving division, where operating profits collapsed from £20.4 million to £1.5 million. Roofing profits halved to £7.5 million, while property earnings dropped by £6.2 million to £5.1 million.

## Morgan Grenfell dips 19%

By NEIL BENNETT  
BANKING CORRESPONDENT

THE worldwide slump in mergers and acquisitions business last year caused a 19 per cent slide in pre-tax profits at Morgan Grenfell, the merchant bank, to £46.6 million.

This was Morgan's first full year as a subsidiary of Deutsche Bank, the German bank that bought Morgan for £950 million in November 1989.

John Craven, Morgan's chairman, said the two banks had made excellent progress towards an effective working arrangement. "A large number of us at a senior level have spent a great deal of time in Germany building up contacts. This is beginning to bear fruit."

The bank also suffered an £11.4 million extraordinary loss, mainly from the management buyout of Morgan Grenfell Laurie, its chartered surveying offshoot.

Mr Craven said the surveyor, which Morgan bought in 1985, no longer fitted with the firm's main corporate finance, asset management and banking businesses. The loss also included a provision for the closure of an office in New York.

During the year Morgan widened its international base by opening DB Morgan Grenfell in Frankfurt, and setting up a joint venture in New York with Gleacher & Co, the



Delayed rewards: John Craven of Morgan Grenfell

corporate finance house.

Morgan has begun work for several important German clients. It is advising Continental, the tyre manufacturer, on the bid from Pirelli, and RWE, a German chemical company, on a \$600 million offer for Vista Chemical in America.

In Britain, it worked on Northern Telecom's bid for STC, the largest public take-

over in 1990. Morgan's total of corporate finance transactions rose by two to 95 in the year, but profits fell because the deals, and fees, were smaller. The banking and treasury division was the most profitable part of the bank in the year.

Mr Craven said bad debt provisions had not risen significantly on the bank's £6.5 billion loan book.

## BUSINESS ROUNDUP

### Wilson Bowden calls for £34m to buy land

WILSON Bowden, the builder and property developer, is raising £34.1 million via a one-for-seven rights issue of new shares at 360p. Existing shares fell 10p to 423p. David Wilson, chairman and chief executive, said the money is to increase the land bank. The rights issue, underwritten by Schroders, accompanied 1990 pre-tax profits of £30.1 million (£40.3 million) and 29.2p earnings per share (40.1p). The total payout rises from 7.6p a share to 8.3p via a final 5.9p.

Mr Wilson, who owned 39 per cent of the company before the rights issue, is subscribing for a further 60,000 shares at a cost of £216,000 and has placed the balance of his entitlement, leaving him with 34.6 per cent of the enlarged share capital. Trusts associated with him will hold 21.5 per cent.

Comment, page 27

### Wassall soars to £7.6m

WASSALL, the conglomerate that took over Metal Closures last year, more than doubled pre-tax profits from £3.2 million to £7.61 million in the year to end-December. However, earnings per share growth was slower, from 10.7p to 11.9p. The group is paying a final dividend of 1.6p, making a total up from 2.2p to 2.5p. Borrowings stand at £34 million.

### Geest leaps to £24.8m

GEEST, the fresh produce group which is the largest importer of bananas to Britain, increased pre-tax profits by 24 per cent to £24.8 million last year. Sales rose by 19 per cent to £395 million and earnings per share by 17 per cent to 22.2p. The final dividend is 3.75p, making 7p, an increase of 22 per cent on last year. Net surplus funds amount to £20.9 million.

### Ossory looks for £21m

OSSORY Estates, the property company, is to raise £21.7 million via a placing of new shares and an open offer. Of that, £14 million will go towards buying two properties from InterCity, a private company.

Shareholders may apply for new shares at 11p each, up to a maximum of nine for every 10 held. Bank of Ireland corporate finance will place shares not taken up. Paribas, which is broker to the issue, is taking 22.75 million shares and InterCity will have at least 4 per cent of Ossory.

Comment, page 27

### SPS shares suspended

SHARES in SPS Consultancy, the interior design group, have been suspended at 10p, pending clarification of its financial position. Having reported pre-tax profits of £381,000 in the year to June 1988, the losses of its acquisition, KPA Consulting Engineers, resulted in the group reporting profits of just £4,000 in 1989. KPA was put into liquidation last year.

### Court ruling against Italy

THE European Court of Justice has ordered the Italian government to recover £497 million that a state company gave to Alfa Romeo in the Eighties before selling it to Fiat. The court backed a 1989 European Commission decision outlawing the subsidy as illegal state aid and ordering Rome to recover the money. Italy had appealed against the order.

### Britannic rises 17%

BRITANNIC Assurance has announced net profits of £17.9 million for last year, a 17 per cent increase on the £15.3 million reported in 1989. A final dividend of 17.3p makes 25.3p for the year, against 20.75p previously.

Turnover for the group was up 12 per cent at £298.9 million. The general business profit of £94,000 is after a transfer from the claims equalisation reserve of £1.5 million to meet the effect of the exceptional weather losses during the year.

## COMPANY BRIEFS

**CATTLE'S (Fin)**  
Pre-tax: £8.2m (£7.7m)  
EPS: 7.48p (7.01p)  
Div: 2.3p, mkg 3.8p

Total dividend up 6 per cent on the 3.575p for 1989. Prospects for second half of 1991 and 1992 are "extremely encouraging".

**EVANS HALSHAW (Fin)**  
Pre-tax: £4.1m (£3.2m)  
EPS: 12.3p (27.4p)  
Div: 7.65p, mkg 11.25p

Total dividend unchanged from 1989. Market for new cars expected to show further falls. Balance sheet unimpaired.

**EW FACT (Fin)**  
Pre-tax: £0.67m (£0.69m)  
EPS: 8.98p (7.88p)  
Div: 2.75p, mkg 3.85p

Total dividend up from 3.5p in 1989. Turnover increased to £4.4m. Enrolment levels for 1991 "are high", says chairman.

**NESTOR-BNA (Fin)**  
Pre-tax: £8.0m (£6.1m)  
EPS: 8.64p (8.22p)  
Div: 2p, mkg 3.15p

Total payout compares with 3p for 1989. Current year viewed with "a mixture of optimism and caution", says chairman.

**TELEMETRIX (Fin)**  
Pre-tax: £4.1m (£4.2m)  
EPS: 2.4p (2.5p)  
Div: 0.8p, mkg 0.8p

Dividend is up 20 per cent on 1989. Turnover grew 44 per cent to £89m. Interest charge of £0.9m (income of £0.9m in 1989).

**SERVOMEX (Fin)**  
Pre-tax: £1.9m (£1.8m)  
EPS: 12.7p (12.1p)  
Div: 3.8p, mkg 5.4p

Total dividend compares with 3.8p payout last year. Sales rose by 15 per cent to £16.7 million. Sales ahead in all markets.

**MANGANESE BRONZE**  
Pre-tax: £0.28m (£2.8m)  
EPS: 0.8p (10.75p)  
Div: Nil (3.5p)

Interim results. Board reports significant fall in orders for new tanks. Powder metals division suffering from lower turnover.

**BUCKINGHAM INT. (Fin)**  
Pre-tax: £5.9m (£5.4m)  
EPS: 5.4p (6.65p)  
Div: 1.5p, mkg 2.1p

Total dividend compares with 1.6p last year. First full-year payout from company since 1986. Gulf troubles hit results.

**NEW CAVENTISH (Int)**  
Pre-tax: £0.01m (£1.3m)  
EPS: Nil (5.61p)  
Div: Nil (nil)

Board optimistic about prospects for medium and long term. Net borrowings unchanged at just over £1m.

**ORIEL GROUP (Fin)**  
Pre-tax: £2.01m (£1.7m)  
EPS: 15p (10.22p)  
Div: 3p, mkg 4.5p

Total payout is improvement on 3.5p for 1989. Company is "confident" progress will be made in current year and beyond.

**VINTEN GROUP (Fin)**  
Pre-tax: £8.6m (£8.4m)  
EPS: 19.8p (10.4p)  
Div: 4.5p, mkg 6.2p

Dividend compares with 4p for previous nine-month period. Gearing reduced from 142 per cent to 97 per cent.

**ABBEYCREST (Fin)**  
Pre-tax: £4.3m (£3.85m)  
EPS: 11.8p (19p)  
Div: 2.4p, mkg 3.6p

Total dividend is unchanged on last year. This year is likely to be as difficult as 1990. Current trading down on last year.

**ABBOTT MEAD (Fin)**  
Pre-tax: £5.25m (£5.85m)  
EPS: 24.08p (27.06p)  
Div: 5.1p, mkg 7.8p

Total dividend is 8 per cent up on 1989. Cash balances exceed £8m. Account gains of £20 million in 1990.

**DRUCK HOLDINGS (Int)**  
Pre-tax: £1.8m (£1.6m)  
EPS: 4.4p (14.6p)  
Div: 2.8p (2.6p)

Next figures will cover nine months to March 31 to accommodate year-end change. Good start made to 1991.

**HIBERNIAN GROUP (Fin)**  
Pre-tax: £123.7m  
EPS: 4.4p (15.3p)  
Div: 3.45p, mkg 5.2p

Total payout compares with 4.8p last year when pre-tax profits were £123.7m. General insurance showing trend of rising premiums.

**CRAMPHORN (Int)**  
Pre-tax: £0.1m (£0.18m)  
EPS: 0.41p (0.98p)  
Div: 0.53p (0.48p)

Sales at garden centres up 16 per cent to £5.1m. Competitive pressures late in the year led to reduced profit margins.

**JOHN I. JACOBS (Fin)**  
Pre-tax: £1.0m (£0.9m)  
EPS: 3.88p (2.73p)  
Div: 1.4p, mkg 2.9p

Total dividend increased from 4.3p for 1989. No increase is expected in dividends this year "unless trade rapidly improves".

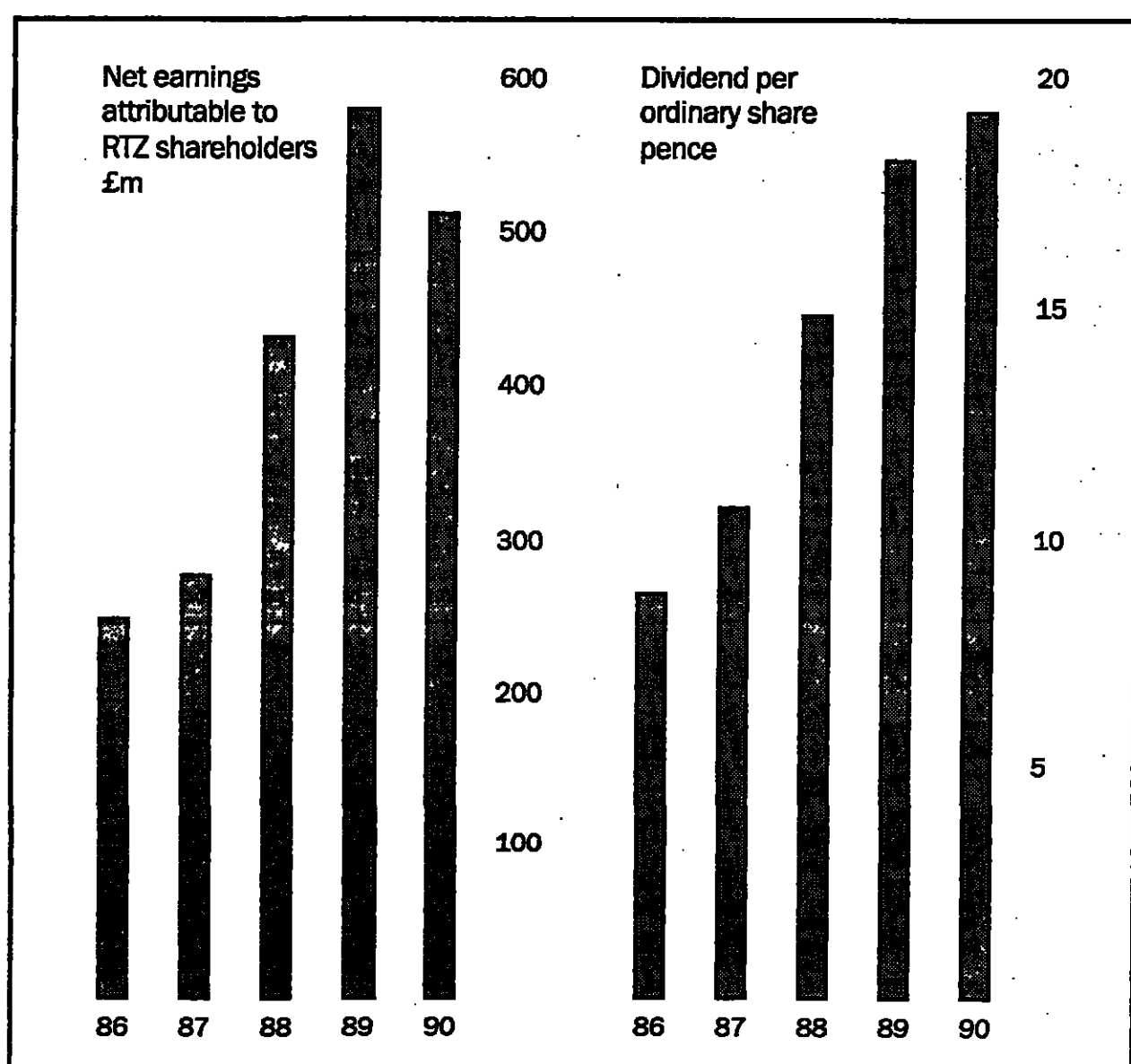
**JOHN MAUNDERS (Int)**  
Pre-tax: £2.6m (£4.1m)  
EPS: 6.88p (10.9p)  
Div: 2.3p (2.3p)

Land bank still being replenished with sites showing good margins at current selling prices. Total of 371 completions in year.

**MAUNDERS (Fin)**  
Pre-tax: £5.8m (£6.7m)  
EPS: 14.31p (14.14p)  
Div: 5p, mkg 7p

Total dividend compares with 6.85p for 1989. Current trading conditions remain depressed, says company. Turnover up 8 per cent.

# RTZ 1990 RESULTS



	1989	1990
Group turnover	£6156m	£5078m
Net attributable earnings	£588m	£507m
Earnings per share	63.1p	51.4p
Dividends per share	18.5p	19.5p

# RTZ

Bringing out the best in the world

For a copy of the RTZ Report and Accounts, please write to The RTZ Corporation PLC, 1 Redcliff Street, Bristol BS1 6NT

THE RTZ CORPORATION PLC, 6 ST. JAMES'S SQUARE, LONDON SW1Y 4LD.

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## STANDARD LIFE

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 15-11-90OUTSTANDING RETURNS  
TO POLICY HOLDERS

## THE GROUP

Standard Life operates in the United Kingdom, Canada and the Republic of Ireland. The value of its assets worldwide was, of course, significantly affected by the sharp falls during the year in the world's financial markets. The total Group assets under management decreased over the year from £20.2 billion to £19.3 billion spread as follows by country of operation:-

COUNTRY	£ billion	Percentage
United Kingdom	15.6	81
Canada	3.0	15
Republic of Ireland	0.7	4
TOTAL:	19.3	100

## BONUSES

The unfavourable returns on equity type investments in 1990 affected the performance of with profits assets. In line with its traditional practice, however, Standard Life's very considerable financial strength was used to protect policyholders from the full effect of market falls and reductions in rates of terminal bonus were restricted to shorter term contracts.

Reversionary and bonus growth rates have been maintained for most classes of business.

Outstanding returns to policyholders were achieved whilst leaving the Company in a position of great financial strength. This financial strength has been affirmed by both Standard & Poor's and Moody's who have each awarded the Company their top AAA rating for long-term ability to meet claims.

## NEW BUSINESS

1990 was another highly successful year with total new premiums in excess of some £1.7 billion, of which £1.2 billion related to the United Kingdom.

Approximately three quarters of the Company's new business in the United Kingdom was secured through Independent Financial Advisers (IFAs).

Standard Life continues to provide significant support for the independent market through IFA Promotion Limited, an organisation set up to maintain a strong and healthy independent sector, and through ORIGO, an organisation which provides advice and practical assistance to intermediaries on the way in which they can most effectively run their business.

Standard Life has appointed a small number of Appointed Representatives and will further increase this number subject to ensuring that its team of Appointed Representatives operates professionally and efficiently.

JOINT VENTURE WITH  
HALIFAX BUILDING SOCIETY

During the year Standard Life successfully established with Halifax Building Society a joint venture company to sell investment products. It is expected that this joint venture Company will go on to establish a significant presence in the market in which it operates.

## INVESTMENT

Although the world's financial markets were weak during 1990, Standard Life believed throughout that better long-term returns would be obtained from continuing to invest rather than holding significant sums on deposit for possible short-term advantage. During the course of the year £1 billion was invested in ordinary shares of which around three quarters was invested in the U.K.

The impact of the economic slowdown enabled Standard Life to buy several completed property investments on attractive terms during the year and taken together with its development programme the Company invested some £240 million in this sector.

## LEGISLATION

The Social Security Act 1990 introduced a number of important changes principally affecting those pension schemes operated on a defined benefits basis.

In addition, the judgement of the Euro-

pean Court on the equalisation of male and female retirement benefits has important implications for all pension schemes although clarification of the actual changes required is still awaited.

In the meantime, Standard Life has initiated a Review Programme for all existing schemes to ensure that employers and their advisers will have all the information they need to take the necessary decisions.

## WIDER SHARE OWNERSHIP

There has been much discussion in recent months about wider share ownership.

Standard Life supports the view of the CBI Task Force that a greater understanding of the wealth creation process and a greater participation in it is highly desirable. It does not however accept that owning shares in individual companies is necessarily the most satisfactory way of achieving this unless the investor is in a position to diversify risk by owning a portfolio of shares in a number of companies. Its view is that by far the best way for most people to participate in the profitability of British companies is to invest in collective savings vehicles - such as life assurance policies, personal pension plans or unit and investment trusts.

## SERVICE

A good measure of success was achieved over the year in improving the service provided to policyholders and intermediaries. Standard Life is, however, fully aware that more requires to be done to provide a service which is consistently good in all aspects of pensions business.

## SELF REGULATION

During the year LAUTRO introduced new requirements for the disclosure of expenses and in addition life companies were required by the Securities and Investments Board to provide a "With Profits Guide" for policyholders.

Both of these innovations should be helpful in indicating the overall level of charges that prospective policyholders may expect to have to pay. These changes were implemented after much debate as a sound compromise between the desirability of publishing helpful information and the costs involved which must, of course, be borne by policyholders.

Standard Life was therefore concerned when the Director General of the Office of Fair Trading reported that in his view the disclosure requirements were significantly anti-competitive. Standard Life does not agree with this view and urges the Securities and Investment Board, in the interests of the industry and its policyholders, to consider the issues involved very carefully before imposing further expensive and potentially counter-productive requirements.

## STAFF

Both the Chairman and the Managing Director paid warm tribute to the continued dedication and loyalty of the Company's staff.

Staff have been whole-hearted in their support and commitment in dealing with the problems growth and changes in business inevitably bring.

BOARD AND EXECUTIVE  
CHANGES

During the year Mr Donald Sutherland, who is a Regional Managing Partner of Ernst & Young, was appointed a Director. Mr Claude Garcia was appointed Executive Vice-President and Chief Operating Officer in Canada.

Sir Eric Yarrow will retire from the Board following the Company's Annual General Meeting after 32 years of distinguished service with the Company.

## FUTURE

Standard Life is uniquely well-placed to face the challenges which will confront the life assurance industry over the coming years. Its aims remain to provide its policyholders with excellent returns on their contracts and to ensure that policyholders and intermediaries alike receive the quality of service they expect.

Standard Life

WE DON'T FOLLOW STANDARDS. WE SET THEM.

THE STANDARD LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY IS A MUTUAL COMPANY REGISTERED IN SCOTLAND (NO 24) WITH ITS HEAD OFFICE AT 7 GEORGE STREET, EDINBURGH. THE STANDARD LIFE GROUP ALSO INCLUDES STANDARD LIFE INVESTMENT FUNDS LIMITED, STANDARD LIFE PENSION FUNDS LIMITED AND STANDARD LIFE TRUST MANAGEMENT LIMITED (ALL IN SCOTLAND).

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Meggitt profits dip to £24m  
on 77% rise in interest bill

By JONATHAN PRYNN

PRE-TAX profits at Meggitt Group fell last year by 8.5 per cent to £23.9 million after a 77 per cent increase in the electronic, energy and aerospace components maker's interest bill.

The interest charge was £5.9 million against £3.3 million in 1989. Year end net debt was £38 million, giving gearing of 56 per cent. Ken Coates, the group managing director, said the interest charge would be lower in 1991, due to reduced debt and moving borrowings into lower interest rate currencies.

A further £1 million in pre-tax profit was lost through adverse currency movements, while property profits were only £0.4 million against £2.2 million in 1989.

Operating profits for the 12 months to December 31 were up by 7.3 per cent to £29.5 million on sales 21 per cent higher at £304.9 million. The final 2.31p dividend makes

3.41p for the year, against 3.3p in 1989.

With the British manufacturing and engineering sectors in recession, sales growth in 1990 was led by American and continental European markets, Mr Coates said. A quarter of group sales were generated in continental Europe, against 11 per cent three years ago. America accounts for about 22 per cent of turnover and Britain the remaining 53 per cent.

Mr Coates said that the civil aerospace operations had experienced little effect from the Gulf war and that this had been more than compensated for by additional defence orders. The long term outlook for civil aerospace orders was still "an inexorable upward curve," he said. The controls division, now the biggest in the group, is also likely to benefit from the Gulf war and plans to set up an office in Kuwait.



Currencies move: Ken Coates of Meggitt Group

SBJ gains  
38% to  
£9.44m

By PHILIP PANGALOS

PRE-TAX profits at Steel Burnill Jones Group, the insurance and reinsurance broker, jumped by 38 per cent from £6.83 million to £9.44 million in the year to end-December, on turnover ahead 48 per cent from £21.4 million to £31.7 million.

Earnings per share rose 16.8 per cent from 16.41p to 19.17p. The total dividend is improved by 11.4 per cent to 12.25p (11p), after a proposed final payment of 8.25p (8p). Investment and rent income advanced from £4.75 million to £6.44 million, and the company also benefited from £1.74 million of exchange gains, against losses of £181,000 last time.

David Beauford Jones, the chairman, said the group's consumer risks business faced a more difficult year, particularly due to the drop in the sales of new vehicles. He added that the group's results will also be affected by the probable decline in the realised sterling value of its dollar income and the impact of lower interest rates on investment income.

Bankers Trust buys  
strategic stake in  
Tate & Lyle target

From BRIAN BUCHANAN IN SYDNEY

BANKERS Trust Australia has built a strategic 5.2 per cent stake in Bundaberg Sugar, Tate & Lyle's Australian takeover target.

The company said that it had paid Aus\$4.6 million (£1.97 million) for 1.24 million Bundaberg shares on Wednesday as investors scorned the Aus\$3.70 a share takeover offer by pushing the share's price to a close of Aus\$3.82.

Another 967,000 Bundaberg shares (1.2 per cent) were traded on the market yesterday after the stock opened at Aus\$3.80. Out of Bundaberg's 78.4 million shares, 5.7 per cent have changed hands since the offer was announced on Tuesday.

Ross Finlay, an associate director of Bankers Trust, said the extra shares had been acquired for pension fund clients in expectation that Tate & Lyle would be forced to raise its bid.

He said: "Basically we think there is a lot bigger issue than

next year's profit in valuing Bundaberg. I don't think that's the right way of doing a valuation for full control."

Mr Finlay said that Bankers Trust had been a long-term investor in Bundaberg, which had been trading as high as Aus\$4.45 last April. "So in that context, Aus\$3.70 looks pretty lean," he said.

Beerworth & Partners, Tate & Lyle's corporate adviser, showed some relief at Bankers Trust's announcement as it scotched speculation of a corporate raid. The news also suggests that winning Bundaberg will cost more than the planned Aus\$290 million.

Mark Hodge, of Beerworth said: "It's positive from our point of view because it's not CSR or British Sugar or someone from Italy and it's also positive from the FIRB (Foreign Investment Review Board) point of view. They have obviously bought in anticipation of a higher offer as they have done on similar occasions in the past."

Morrison  
battles  
to £50m

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH

WM MORRISON Supermarkets, the Yorkshire food retailing chain, continues to confound critics who believed it would be swamped by the supermarket giants. The group saw its shares rise 20p to 247p on the back of strong figures.

Pre-tax profits for the year to February 2, 1991, rose 36 per cent to £50.3 million on sales up 17.3 per cent to £910 million. Earnings per share rose from 11.9p to 16.4p and the final dividend is 1.2p, making 1.55p for the year, an increase of 19.2 per cent.

Like-for-like sales increased by 8.4 per cent and the operating margin rose by 0.9 per cent, largely due to the switch to central distribution facilities.

The interest charge increased from £8.3 million to £11.8 million and interest capitalised rose from £3.7 million to £5.7 million.

Although the product range was cut back, four new stores were opened and a new 70,000 sq ft store at Hillsborough, Sheffield, which is to open on Easter Monday, will bring the total number of stores to 50.

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EFFICIENCY. THE DESIGN WHICH

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## WALL STREET

**New York**  
BLUE chips achieved good gains in morning trading, helped by strong buying in the drugs sector and steady bonds. The Dow Jones industrial average was 16 points up at 2,888.03. Thomas Walsh, the chief of the trading desk at Nikko, said the rise was a continuation of the recovery from Tuesday's selling. Rising shares outnumbered falls by seven to two. (Reuter)

The electricity generators, which have just joined the FTSE 100 index, eased 4p to 135p for PowerGen, while National Power firmed 1p to 135 1/2p.

Courtney, Pope, the troubled shopfitting and engineering company, rose 9p to 26p, having touched 30p, after the news that it is in talks which could lead to the sale of a significant subsidiary. The company said a fuller announcement would be made if the talks are successful.

**23p to 100p after the company axed its interim dividend after**

**PHILIP PANGALOS**

[illegible][illegible]

First Dealings	Last Dealings	Last Declaration	For Settlement
March 18	April 5	June 27	July 8
Cell options were taken out on: 213/371 BTR Vnts 83-84, Brent Walker, Burns Anderson, Business Tech, Conroy Pet, Hunterprint, Tuskar, Wembley. Pubs: ADT, Marley. Puts & Calls: Aviva, Davy Corp, Sasechi & Sasechi, Tuskar.			

One of the reasons for our success is that we have some of the most celebrated premium brands in the world.

Another is the way our businesses are spread throughout the world. This has enabled us to minimise the effect of regional economic pressures.

Not surprisingly, we're one of Britain's largest overseas earners. More than 80 per cent of our profits originate outside the U.K. That's a substantial

contribution to Britain's balance of payments.

We have now become the most profitable company in the world in spirits and brewing combined, and second only to Coca-Cola among the world's beverage companies.

Added to this, we continue to improve and develop our distribution networks worldwide.

Our businesses remain clearly focussed, and well placed to achieve the demanding targets which we have set ourselves over the next few years.

The contents of this advertisement, for which the Directors are solely responsible, have been approved for the purposes of section 57 of the Financial Services Act 1986, by Price Waterhouse as authorised persons.

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

	360	390	420	450	480	510	540	570	600
AA	390	30	40	50	14	25	23		
AA (N45)	460	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
AA (N60)	460	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
AA (N70)	600	107	115	128	3	8	13	13	
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Mr. Gorman said there are 160,000 telephone calls a month to Queens Reach. The current government is the second largest New Hampshire business company, and on the island, the Microsoft company, it is possible to find many other companies in the island, outside of the island, outside of the island, outside of the island.

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## Queen's Bench Division

Law Report March 22 1991

Queen's Bench Division

## Interest on repayment of interim sum

**Wardens and Commonalty of the City of London v New Hampshire Insurance Company**  
Before Mr Justice Phillips  
[Judgment March 21]

In ordering a plaintiff to repay an interim payment pursuant to section 32(3) of the Supreme Court Act 1981, the court had power by Order 29, rule 17 of the Rules of the Supreme Court to order the payment of interest on the sum.

Mr Justice Phillips so held in the Commercial Court of the Queen's Bench Division giving judgment for the defendants, the New Hampshire Insurance Company, against the plaintiffs, the Wardens and Commonalty of the City of London, on a point arising from his judgment in the main action on the plaintiff's claim under a construction contract.

Section 32 of the Supreme Court Act 1981 provides: "(1) to make an order requiring a party to the proceedings to make an interim payment..."

"(2) Any rules of court which make provision in accordance with sub-section (1) may include

provision for enabling a party to any proceedings who, in pursuance of such an order, has made an interim payment to recover the whole or part of the amount of the payment."

"(3) Any rules made by virtue of this section may include such incidental, supplementary and consequential provisions as the rule-making authority may consider necessary or expedient."

Order 29, rule 17 of the Rules of the Supreme Court provides: "Where a defendant has been ordered to make an interim payment... the court may, in giving or making a final judgment or order... make such order with respect to the interim payment as may be just, and in particular - (a) in order for the repayment by the plaintiff of all or part of the interim payment..."

Mr Michael Crystal, QC and Miss Susan Prosser for the plaintiffs; Mr Simon Tuckey, QC and Mr Richard Wilton-Smith for the defendants.

MR JUSTICE PHILLIPS said the defendants had been ordered to make an interim payment of £3,379,340 by Mr Justice Hobhouse on June 29, 1990. The money had been paid, together with interest of

£9,721.39 and an additional sum of £972,14, on July 6, 1990. His Lordship had on January 18, 1991 ordered the repayment within 28 days of £3,380,312.14, being the interim payment plus the additional sum. That sum had been repaid on February 18.

The defendants had applied in addition for repayment of the £9,721.39 interest and for interest on the £3,380,312.14 from June 6, 1990 to February 18, 1991.

The words "incidental, supplementary and consequential" in the Act and "with respect to the interim payment" in the rule were not precise. It was clear legislative policy that, where the court ordered one party to make a payment by way of debt, damages or restitution to another, the court should have discretionary power to award interest to compensate the successful party for the loss of the use of the money.

Lord Brandon had recognised a discretionary power to award interest in *BP Exploration Co (Libya) Ltd v Hunt (No 2)* (1983) 2 AC 552, 573.

Both the requirements of justice and general legislative policy demanded that the court should have the power to award interest to compensate for the

period when the defendant had unjustifiably been deprived of the interim payment and the plaintiff had unjustifiably had the use of it.

Having regard to those policy considerations the 1981 Act should be interpreted so as to confer on the rule-making authority the power to make a rule giving the court power to award interest when ordering repayment of an interim payment.

Solicitors: Masons, Davis Hope & Furniss, Manchester.

## Wall is an extension

**Richmond upon Thames London Borough Council v Secretary of State for the Environment and Another**

The building of a metre high parapet wall on the flat roof of a rear extension constituted an enlargement of a dwelling house for the purposes of the Town and Country Planning General Development Order (SI 1988 No 1813) despite the fact that it had led to no increase in the volume of usable space within the house.

Mr Justice Henry so held in the Queen's Bench Division on March 12 in dismissing an appeal by the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames against the decision of a planning inspector to allow Mr J. A. P. Neale's appeal against an enforcement notice on the ground that the addition fell within permitted development.

**Cunningham and Others v Reading Football Club Ltd**  
Before Mr Justice Drake  
[Judgment March 19]

A football club was liable for injuries caused to police officers while on duty at a football match if those injuries resulted from the club's neglect to take precautions against clearly foreseeable acts of violent supporters.

Mr Justice Drake so held in the Queen's Bench Division in a

reserved judgment granting the plaintiffs, David Cunningham, Kenneth Timberlake, David Harris, Robert Turley and Haydn Wood, all police officers, damages for personal injury caused by negligence and breach of statutory duty under the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 on the part of Reading Football Club Ltd. The club's third-party action against the Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police was dismissed.

Mr John Melville Williams, QC and Mr Charles Pugh for the plaintiffs; Mr Richard Davies for the club; Mr Edward Faulks for the chief constable.

MR JUSTICE DRAKE said that the plaintiffs had been injured as a result of terrifying violence during a football match between Reading and Bristol City.

The plaintiffs had all been struck by pieces of concrete loosened from the terraces and thrown at them by spectators.

The defendants knew in advance that crowd trouble might well occur. The match was a "local derby" which would attract promotion hopes and the supporters of the visiting team were known to have a bad

reputation for violent behaviour. The defendants also knew that at a match only four months earlier spectators had loosed concrete by kicking and jumping on it and had then thrown concrete missiles at the police. After that match no measures had been taken to make it more difficult to loosen the concrete.

Both the police and the spectators at the match were visitors to the stadium. The defendants had a duty to take such reasonable steps as were necessary to ensure that their visitors were safe.

Given the appalling dilapidated state of the ground, the

conduct of the spectators was easily foreseeable by the defendants and was a strong probability.

A reasonably prudent occupier would have realised the concrete in the ground was dangerous, because it might supply a source of missiles, and would have taken steps to remove or minimise the risk.

The third-party proceedings against the chief constable were dismissed as liability had been established solely on the basis that the defendants had failed to properly maintain the state of their ground.

Solicitors: Russell Jones & Walker, Davies Arnold Cooper, Barlow Lyde & Gilbert.

## Proving care of car

**Worsley v Hollins**

A Ministry of Transport certificate of roadworthiness was not sufficient to discharge the burden of showing that reasonable care had been exercised in maintaining a vehicle but evidence that instructions had been given to a garage for a full service just six weeks before the accident could be taken into account.

The Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Staughton and Sir Denis Buckley) so held on February 28 when allowing the appeal of Robert H. Hollins against a finding of negligence made against him by Mr Recorder Gresham at Aldersham County Court on September 29, 1989 in an action brought by Gail Amanda Worsley for damages arising out of a road accident.

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Application form (quoting the above reference No.) is obtainable from the Directorate Personnel, European Patent Office, Erhardstrasse 27, D-8000 Munich 2, Tel: (089) 2399 4318 and must be returned completed by 19. April 1991.

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Closing date: 12th April 1991.

amnesty international

For further information and an application form please contact:  
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# Taking stock and riding out the recession

Home owners, unable to sell in the property slump, are still spending money on improvements. However, the DIY superstores face many challenges, Simon Ambrose reports

In the past few months, the DIY multiples have reached a milestone as openings have taken the total number of superstores to more than 1,000 for the first time. But after the furious pace of developments of the past decade, when operators added about 30 million sq ft of retail space, the last few stores have been slow in coming. This is not because the multiple operators lack capital. Rather, it seems that openings are being held back because institutional investors are reluctant to fund development of the retail parks on which most DIY superstores are sited.

The figures for projected openings this year represent the most restricted opening programme in the industry for nearly ten years. While most leading players are refitting shops, only 50 stores are likely to open, and there may be a handful of relocations.

\*There is no capital restriction on new store development on our part," says Mike Robertshaw, the managing director of Great Mills, which has 90 stores, making it the fourth-largest chain. "Sale and leaseback opportunities just do not exist any more," he adds. "We have recently had a number of leases signed up, only for the developers to pull out at the last minute because they have not been able to find the funding." As a result, the group expects to open only three stores and make two relocations this year.

The multiple groups, with one or two exceptions, have been performing reasonably well despite the recession. The latest figures show most of the leading superstore groups maintaining sales growth, although only as a result of opening new space. Texas Homecare, for instance, made pre-tax profits of £39.7 million for the year ending December 31, 1990, compared to its previous year's £40.1 million,

on sales of £560.7 million (£529.0 million).

A spokesman for the parent company, Ladbroke, says: "Texas Homecare performed creditably and will move ahead once mortgage interest rates are at a reasonable level."

Only Scotland showed sales growth in real terms for the group, which is ranked joint second with Do It All, each having 230 stores. Texas, however, has a larger slice of the sales cake, and because Do It All plans to close nine outlets where former Payless and Do It All store catchment areas overlap, Texas will re-emerge as the undisputed number two by the end of the year.

B&Q, the market leader, with 280 stores, looks likely to exceed expectations with a projected full-year pre-tax profit of £94.2 million (£87.1 million) on a turnover of £870.0 million (£836.7 million). The group's commitment to an electronic-point-of-sale programme, with full inventory control systems and more expertise than most of the other players, is likely to prove crucial, as is last year's move into central distribution. "Although people cannot move, they are still spending money on the housing they have got. I think it is fair to say that we are cautiously optimistic this year, but nobody is saying that things will be anything less than difficult," says Bill Whiting, B&Q's marketing director.

Both Great Mills and Sainsbury's Homebase (ranked fifth with 62 stores) have performed satisfactorily in recent years. Wickes, in sixth place with 57 stores, continues



Counter attraction: stores are widening the range on their shelves to draw customers

to do well after eight consecutive years of record turnover and pre-tax profit, although the poor performance of its Hunter and Maiden timber businesses has recently led to a £42.6 million rights issue.

Do It All, however, which merged with Payless last year as a joint venture between its owners, W.H. Smith and Boots, has proved the odd man out, taking an interim joint trading profit of just £6 million to December 1. Right from the start critics questioned the wisdom of marrying the largely profitable Payless with the less commercially

successful Do It All. Delays in revealing its combined trading strategy have also fuelled speculation about its long term future.

Holding DIY superstores profits steady in the recession, while many industry players have been suffering losses of 20-30 per cent, has not been painless. Stockholding in stores has been cut back to such an extent that "out-of-stocks" could be a serious problem if there is an above average demand on any product. Superstores would argue, however, that their use of computer systems analysis makes this unlikely.

Superstore operators, for the first time since the recession began to bite in September 1988, are starting to see a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel as interest rates

start to fall. Mr Robertshaw says: "There has been a definite slowdown since the middle of last year but I think Easter could mark the turnaround. The movement of a couple of percentage points, and good weather at Easter could make all the difference."

Post-recession DIY superstores retailing is likely to bring the colour back rapidly to executive checks. Pent-up demand for DIY and home-improvement goods, and the growing trend towards home ownership which is likely to lead to a further 700,000 homes in private hands by 1995, will almost certainly make this one of the fastest-growing retail sectors once again. Mr Robertshaw says: "We are certainly still extraordinarily optimistic about the growth potential of DIY."

## A softer image, but harder sell

Marketing directors are looking at ways of boosting their sales by attracting a new style of customers

With market saturation only a couple of hundred stores away, the leading DIY players are beginning to look further afield and are adjusting their plans accordingly. Differentiation is the new strategy, and some developments are making it clear that there is a long way to go yet. A growing professionalism in the industry is replacing the instinctive entrepreneurship which has been the guiding spirit for so long.

There will also be further consolidation. Many of the smaller superstore chains have been snapped up by the larger companies, and many believe there will be three "super" superstore operators after the final shake-out.

B&Q has made one of the boldest moves in recent years with the launch of a chain called Depot. The group has occupied the middle ground of DIY, and this development stamps its authority on the area even more, boosting the number of products in-store by 25 per cent to about 31,000.

While it has cut down on space given over to peripheral areas such as carpets, motor-ing and furniture, B&Q has broadened the offer in core departments such as hand and power tools. The strategy here is to move in on the growing demand for better and more professional products, and the increasing numbers of jobbing builders and tradesmen prepared to desert builders' merchants for the superstores.

"Convenience is a factor, and the right location is vital, but you need more than that—excellence. Depot is all about having range authority," says Bill Whiting, B&Q's marketing director. The investment needed in the extra stockholding is likely to be substantial, particularly as B&Q has begun to refit some of its existing stores as Depot outlets, in addition to opening stores. The extra staff needed to stock the stores is also likely to be costly.

The timing of the launch could have been better—the group is rumoured to be running into trouble with the Depot concept at its Northern Ireland stores—but the logic

of the move is incontestable. Other operators clearly see it the same way. Sainsbury's Homebase, which is geared towards ABCI purchasers and is regarded as an operator on the "soft" side, with its Laura Ashley franchise, opened Homebuild at Crayford, Kent, only days ago. The broadened building materials section there is clearly aimed at the same customers as B&Q's Depot.

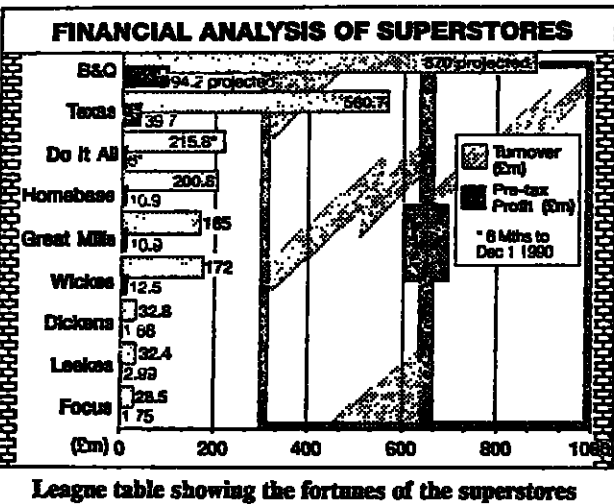
Homebase may need all the help it can get. Although it is considered to be one of the more profitable operators, with sales matching B&Q's £99 per sq ft and Texas's £98, the group has announced the closure of two of its stores, Great Yarmouth and Blackpool, partly as a result of heavy local competition. Both stores were only a few years old. "You are not going to get it right every time," says Andrew Mollie, the head of marketing for Homebase. It is now linking northern openings with openings of its parent company's food stores.

Another development, again on the same lines as B&Q and Homebase's ventures, is well advanced at RMC, the parent company of Great Mills, which is to test launch a retail concept named Bay-6 this summer.

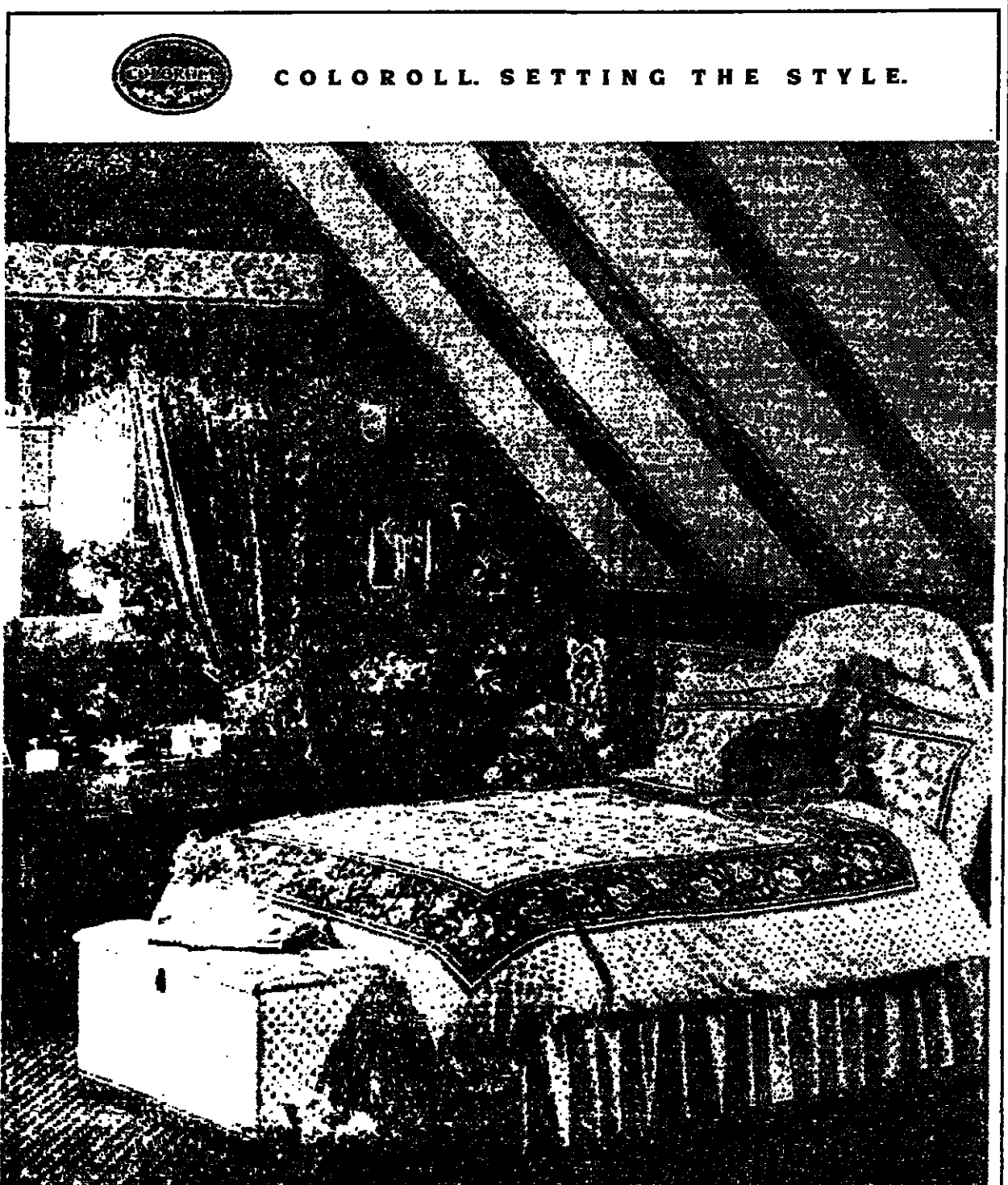
Great Mills claims to be benefiting from its "new concept", launched a few years ago, which took the group into the softer end of the market, concentrating more on fashion and decorating. The company is gradually bringing its large number of old fashioned stores into line. The group has also decided to go ahead with a £15 million electronic-point-of-sale programme, the last of the big operators to do so.

While others start to place more emphasis on the sale of building materials, Texas has pulled away from the area. Texas has pulled further away from competing directly with B&Q by moving more into flat-pack furniture and the decorative sector. The group is thought to have had a 12 per cent share of the flat-pack kitchen market alone last year.

SIMON AMBROSE



League table showing the fortunes of the superstores



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## Learning DIY in Spanish

SCOPE for store development might be drying up in the United Kingdom, but there are plenty of possibilities on the Continent (Simon Ambrose writes).

In Spain, where DIY superstores are starting to take off, Wickes opened its first store a few days ago. Another two stores open later this year.

Apart from Wickes, which is building successful operations in Belgium, France and The Netherlands, Texas is the only UK DIY superstore to "have a go" at the Continent.



Conquering the Continent: Bill Whiting, the chairman of Wickes UK & Continent

B&Q, which extends to Northern Ireland, says it is not interested.

Continental expansion is unlikely to figure in the plans of Do It All, the third largest group, for the time being. The group has its hands full putting together the blueprint for its delayed plan to take the recently merged chain forward, to boost falling profits.

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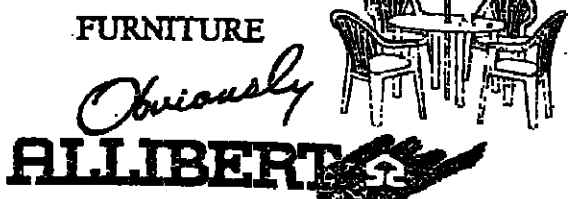
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other operators clearly see  
the same way. Sainsbury's  
nursery, which is a giant  
in the market, has been  
expanded as an operator on  
the "soft" side, with its new  
nursery franchise, opening  
in May at Crayford, Kent,  
just days ago. The new  
nursery materials section  
is clearly aimed at the  
DIY customers as B&Q's  
partner.

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ought to have had a 12-  
month share of the DIY  
market alone last  
year.

SIMON AMBRIDGE

# Into battle up the garden path

Large DIY chains  
and small stores  
are fighting over a  
lucrative green  
market, writes  
Derek Harris

Fierce competition between the nursery and seeds people and the DIY chain superstores in the £1.7 billion gardening and leisure sector is intensifying. Each has a decisive role in a sector that appears to be a stable part of retailing.

The superstores are trying to strengthen their grip. Meanwhile, more and more small independents are being sold because they cannot compete with the refined buying, distributing and retailing techniques that are the hallmark of the chains.

The superstores sell about a quarter of all "non-green" garden items, a figure that seems likely to rise as they carry more products such as building materials, lighting and barbecue equipment.

About 8 per cent of the gardening and leisure sector is claimed by B&Q, a subsidiary of Kingfisher, of which Woolworth, with its own stake in gardening items, is also a part. This gives B&Q market leadership in the sector; 90 per cent of its outlets (more than 230 stores) contain garden centres or outdoor departments, and all planned new stores will have them.

Bill Whitting, the marketing director of B&Q, says: "We are giving more space to these leisure goods, but it will primarily boost sales of outdoor materials."

"Plants are seasonal. Conservatories are selling the year round. It is, you could say, a recognition that a DIY superstore cannot be a country garden centre. We are selling more plants because we are managing the business better and marketing better."

"People seem less inclined to see a garden as a place of work, for growing vegetables and so on. They want something that looks good, is easy to maintain and effectively adds another room, a large one, to the house."

The eyes of superstore executives sparkle at the mention of the £150 million a year being spent by Britons on items such as garden furniture



Business by the acre: John Ravenscroft has made his nursery a sightseeing attraction as well as a garden centre

and barbecue equipment. Growth there is running at 5 per cent a year.

Ladbroke's Texas has expanded rapidly to become a strong second force in the gardening sector. Texas has about 160 gardening outlets. W.H. Smith's Do It All, with about 80 garden centres, was recently swelled when the group took over the Payless DIY chain. Other leading companies are Great Mills, with more than 80 garden centres, and Sainsbury's Homebase chain, in whose retailing gardening plays an integral part. Homebase has 63 outlets.

Although there may be more than 600 garden centres allied to the DIY superstores, there are probably almost another 200 run by independent multiples devoted exclusively to the gardening business, and more than 1,000 sole operators. This means the independents account for a big share of the plants, shrubs and trees market.

More independent chains have been emerging. These use refined techniques and are characterised by the ambience and style of personal service that the best of the nurseries have always had.

The top three independent multiples are Gardenstore, Country Gardens and Wyevale, all of which have a score or more outlets and plan to expand. Other large multiples are Crampthorne, originally a seed company, in Chelmsford, Essex, Notcutts, which has a reputation for rose-growing,

and Hillier, renowned for its trees.

Wyevale, which is based in Hereford and expects to open four new outlets this year, started as a nursery in 1932 and is one of the oldest companies in the gardening sector. The company's turnover was up 12 per cent last year to more than £18 million, and pre-tax profits were up 29 per cent at £2.1 million.

Less typically, Country Gardens emerged via a Business Expansion Scheme by a team skilled in finance, which has made it a successful retailer of garden items from plants to clothing.

Gardenstore is another independent closer in philosophy to the superstores. The

company was created by Malcolm Parkinson, its chief executive, and his partner, John Kennedy, who were both once with B&Q. There are 16 Gardenstores in Texas DIY stores and 14 outlets standing alone. Another five sites have planning permission.

The Gardenstore chain was started two years ago and now has a turnover of more than £16 million. Gardenstore aims to have 50 outlets by the end of this year and expects most of the new ones to be in Texas stores. By the end of next year the total should rise to about 80, Mr Parkinson says.

"It is much faster growth

than originally planned," he says. "We see ourselves as leisure retailers. People spend a lot of time in a garden centre. What you need are things to see that give the 'ooh' and 'ah' factor." Gardenstore aims to sell on a combination of price, range and ambience, Mr Parkinson adds.

Yet sole outlets, which most in the sector feel are under the greatest threat as the garden centre scene changes, can fight back.

John Ravenscroft has more than 100 acres "in the middle of nowhere" between Nantwich, Cheshire, and the Shropshire border. In the Sixties and Seventies the business was primarily a wholesaling nursery. There is still a

## LEADING CENTRES

Top ten superstores with garden centres

B&Q	249
Texas	160
Great Mills	82
Do It All	80
Homebase	63
Focus	13
Hampden	7
Budget	5
Dickens	3
Lookers	2

Top ten independent garden centres

Gardenstore	26
Country Gardens	22
Wyevale	20
Crampthorne	15
Notcutts	11
Kennedy's	8
Hillier	8
Strikes	7
Hurran	6
Jardine's	6

Source: DIY Superstores, December 1990

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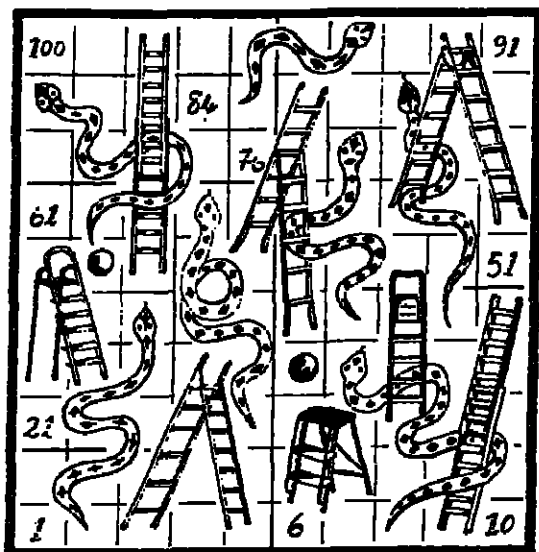
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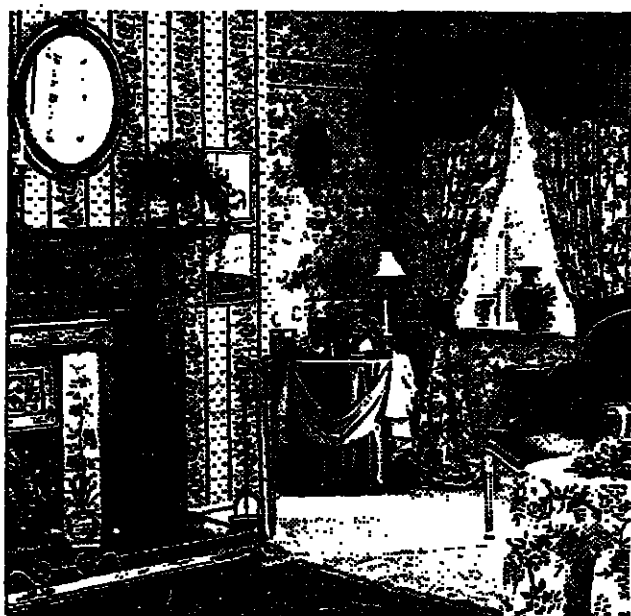
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Cutting edge: Gavin Turner, a Qualcast engineer, tackles the Hyde Park grass to demonstrate the mower that was in competition with Flymo

## The own-label challenge

**B**attles in the DIY field among established brands from leading manufacturers and own-labels carrying the names of retail chains are reminiscent of the skirmishes in the grocery trade. There are differences. So far there is less penetration by own-label brands overall, and generally there is not the degree of aggressive marketing found in groceries.

Bill Whiting, the marketing director of Kingfisher's B&Q, says: "There are long-standing brands of 30 or 40 years in the gardening sector but not so strong that they spring to everybody's mind. In groceries people can reel off brand names by the dozen."

However, few would have missed the mayhem generated by the "hover mower" of recent years as Qualcast and Flymo fought for ascendancy in lawn mowers.

Advertising is now less raucous, although spending on promotion remains high as new products enter the market. Flymo, whose original expertise was in hover-style mowers, just as cylinders were Qualcast's forte, has brought out a hover model that also leaves the much favoured lawn

stripes. As a result, Flymo, which spent about £3 million on promotion last year, will continue intensive television advertising.

Les Evans, Flymo's managing director, says: "Lawn-care products, like mowers, will stay under the banner of the big manufacturers. There is a constant innovation factor. There is service back-up. Consumers need this security."

British consumers now appear to be moving upmarket, he says. Three-year parts guarantees such as those offered by Flymo and Qualcast appeal to British buyers.

The Black & Decker image looms large in DIY electrical tools as the company maintains its high level of promotion to stay ahead of European and Far East competitors.

At one time Black & Decker accounted for virtually all DIY electrical power tools sold but the Ger-

man company Robert Bosch, with its high profile image in motor components and domestic electrical appliances, has become a serious rival.

This sector could become more open to the advances of own-label products. Ladbroke's Texas Homecare DIY superstore chain has an own-label brand of cordless power tools and Wickes, with its special appeal to tradesmen in construction, also has power tools under its own name.

The Bosch philosophy on power tools is in step with those of the big makers of mowers even though it realises that several DIY superstore chains intend to develop own-label power tools. The company points out that developing an own-label machine is expensive.

The march towards more DIY own-labels has been in step with the growth of DIY superstores. Chains

such as B&Q and Texas have own-label items accounting for a third or more of the goods they sell.

The pressure for more own-label goods is long-term, perhaps best seen in the 63 Homebase outlets of J. Sainsbury. About two-thirds of the goods sold in its grocery stores are own-label. Own-label goods account for about a quarter of sales at Homebase, but the company intends to increase this.

About half the goods sold by Texas are own-label. The company claims to be the biggest retailer of garden furniture, all under the Texas brand, and the second largest seller of kitchen furniture after MFI, the furniture retail chain.

Ron Tremmer, Texas Homecare's managing director, says: "A mix of half and half between national brands and own-label looks about right. Especially in some sectors, you need the well-known brands with their innovation and strong appeal."

Texas considered own-label mowers but decided that a complicated and bulky product imported from abroad — which was the option — was not cost-efficient.

## Helpful staff are the key to success

**S**ome customers regard the do-it-yourself superstore as being too much find-it-yourself. They say they have to look through badly signposted shelves and work out what they need.

However, although the typical assistant may be a brightly dressed young person who has never boiled a bucket of fishy-smelling glue, he will be informed and helpful. If he cannot give detailed advice, he will find an expert who can.

DIY retailing is so competitive that the large companies, such as B&Q, Texas, W.H. Smith and J. Sainsbury, try to gain any advantage they can.

A well trained and motivated staff often has the edge. All chains have in-house training programmes to give customers a service and provide the stores with a stable workforce from which to draw management teams.

The training quality is such that B&Q has been asked by the National Council for Vocational Qualifications to develop the first two levels of competence in DIY retailing. Janet Rubin, the personnel director, says: "This fulfils a need — recognised qualifications and transferable skills."

The company has second management staff to the Prince's Youth Business Trust to help entrepreneurs to start businesses.

Good employees can be elusive but some companies have new remedies

The chains have also had to take notice of the demographic changes, which will rob them of many school-leavers in the mid Nineties and make the job market more competitive. The initiatives being developed are schemes in which retirement is abolished and older workers stay on if they wish. More older people have been recruited and store operators have been surprised that they often understand computerised equipment more easily than younger staff.

Such policies began as pilot schemes in some areas but have become more or less national policy in the business. Another trend has been the employment of skilled tradesmen as on-the-spot advisers. The customer likes being able to discuss a problem with a plumber or a carpenter.

Jim Hodgkinson, B&Q's chief executive, says: "We know the labour force will grow by four million by 1995, but the number of school-leavers is falling. Much of the shortfall will be made up by women, and sometimes men, returning to work."

Mr Hodgkinson says the company has also considered the role of women in senior

management, although there is still a feeling that DIY is a male preserve.

"We have encouraged more female management trainees and have devised innovative working patterns to increase our flexibility as employers," he says. "One in three applications recently has come from women. A considerable number of our assistant managers and heads of in-store departments are female. So are 24 of our 273 store managers. We also have women in senior positions in our head office, including on the board."

DAVID YOUNG



All ages: Jim Hodgkinson

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managing director, Ron  
Tremmer, says is  
now a reality. The  
company has been  
selling household  
electrical goods for  
many years, but  
it has now decided  
to expand its range  
to include a full  
range of household  
electrical goods. This  
includes everything  
from kettles and  
toasters to vacuum  
cleaners and  
dishwashers. The  
company says that  
it is a natural  
development for  
it, as many of its  
customers are  
householders who  
are looking for  
everything in one  
place. The company  
also says that it  
is a good way of  
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## Electronic retailing can generate profits

From Epos to Eftpos, the latest systems are helping big stores to keep a finger on the pulse of their business

THE largest DIY superstores have invested heavily in computerisation and are proud of it. So much so that two of the largest chains, B&Q and Texas Homecare, even produce in-store leaflets extolling the virtues of electronic retailing.

Advantages for their customers are said to include quicker service at checkouts, less chance of human error by the sales staff, a reduction in the number of items being out of stock and itemised till receipts.

B&Q estimates that its investment in information technology has now topped £100 million. The most visible sign is the use of laser scanning at checkouts to read the bar codes shown on each item.

For the stores it has many advantages, not least by removing the need to price each item individually.

These systems must work in tandem with their human counterparts, however — prosecutions have resulted when prices held by the computer have varied from those displayed on shelf stickers.

The problem is likely to be solved over the next few years by the use of electronic shelf edge labels using small, liquid crystal display screens. Prices displayed on the shelf and those read by the checkout scanners will then be driven from the same computer database.

Electronic retailing is considered vital for large chainstores if they are to remain competitive. Electronic point of sale (Epos) systems provide more than just customer convenience. As each item is sold, it can be monitored and overnight or weekly reports can be produced, detailing exactly how the business is performing.

"Stores don't have to estimate margins any longer but can see what they are," says Duncan Florence, the senior manager of Hoskyns distribution and retail division.

Where Epos terminals are linked to stock control systems, inventory levels can be quickly adjusted to send stock

to the right parts of the country or trigger replacement orders to suppliers when stocks get low.

"I don't think we have even scratched the surface as far as some of the benefits of Epos are concerned," says Des Lee, the information technology director for B&Q. "I think the battle of the Nineties will be about knowing your customers. How they walk through a store, what they buy, what they don't buy."

Linked closely to Epos

societies should pick up the bill. An experiment in three cities in 1989, called Eftpos UK, aimed to provide a single network that would be used by all of the banks and building societies. It was stopped six months later with no sign of a nationwide service being planned for the future. Instead, such networks have become the province of third party carriers.

But perhaps the biggest problem will be in convincing customers to use it. While retailers like to collect their money as quickly as possible, customers frequently like to delay payment as long as possible.

Superstores all accept several credit cards and, for larger purchases, it is the customers' favourite method of payment, offering a free period before they have to pay. This may change with more annual fees coming in for credit cards and, from this month, retailers are legally able to charge a premium when credit cards are used — although stores are very wary of doing so. Both B&Q and Texas Homecare say they have no plans to introduce differential pricing for credit cards.

The final element of electronic retailing for the superstore is electronic data interchange (EDI) — networks designed to handle ordering from suppliers, transmit invoices and, eventually, the subsequent payment. As stock levels fall to a predetermined level, for example, the system can be programmed to send off an electronic order to a supplier. At B&Q, 60 to 70 per cent of suppliers now accept orders electronically, although electronic invoicing has yet to take off.

Epos is also likely to mean more promotions of the type found in America. When the managers' electronic systems tell them that a store is full of people but that sales are very slow, bells ring, lights flash and for a time all items are offered at 10 per cent off.

Instant Eftpos systems are still a problem. They are expensive, can be slow in operation and there are arguments over whether retailers or the banks and building

societies should pick up the bill. An experiment in three cities in 1989, called Eftpos UK, aimed to provide a single network that would be used by all of the banks and building societies. It was stopped six months later with no sign of a nationwide service being planned for the future. Instead, such networks have become the province of third party carriers.

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MATTHEW MAY

## Making the first move

Deciding when to centralise distribution in a superchain can be a problem for management, Rodney Hobson says

Flexibility is the key when distributing goods in a DIY superchain. In recent years, the move has been towards centralised control and storage — but common sense has to prevail. Even chains with a central depot may accept as much as 50 per cent of goods direct from the manufacturer to individual stores.

The move to centralisation has been slow in coming but is accelerating. Wickes set out on that route four years ago and B&Q followed early last year. Barry Norris, the deputy managing director of Great Mills, says: "The more multiple DIY stores that transfer distribution to in-house, the more pressure will be placed on suppliers and their contract distributors. Their service will be reduced and all they can do in the longer term is raise their costs."

Where a supplier could deliver to, say, Wickes, B&Q and Great Mills at the same time, two of those deliveries have already been lost. The move of us that move into centralisation, the more the burden of delivery costs will fall on those still keeping direct delivery to their branches.

Mr Norris resists the suggestion that DIY superstores have been slow to centralise. He says: "We have not centralised because in the past we had too few stores creating too little volume. We are still doing the sums very carefully. If we switch too early it will cost us more money than we want to spend. If we move too late we will waste money."

Stuart Burrell, at Wickes, says: "We started our central system four years ago but we have not entirely centralised. With some items, such as loft

insulation, each store needs a complete container load. There is no point in taking it to a centralised location and redistributing it. So the manufacturer delivers direct to the store when required."

The big drawback of central stores is that they involve double handling. This does mean, however, a considerable saving in storage space. The central depot can keep enough stock to meet a heavy run on a product at any one store. Mr Burrell says: "There are virtually no storage areas at our stores."

B&Q set up its central store at Ashton, near Warrington, at the beginning of last year and already puts through about 55 per cent of its business in terms of lines and turnover.

Bill Whiting, the marketing director, says: "When the switchover is completed it will handle 75 to 80 per cent of our goods." As with Wickes, B&Q has found that keeping direct delivery of bulky items such as cement from supplier to store is more efficient than going through the central stores. He adds: "We only centralise where it is worth our while by taking costs out of the supply chain."

B&Q has found a centralised store particularly useful in dealing with imported lines, which account for about 15 per cent of its turnover. Mr Whiting says: "We are now buying direct from abroad into our warehouse, so reducing the cost of the middle men, and we have set up our own import department."



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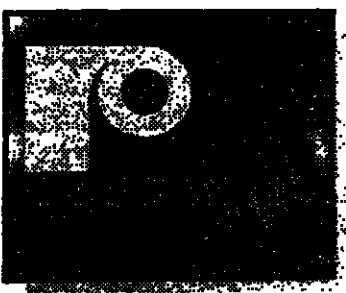
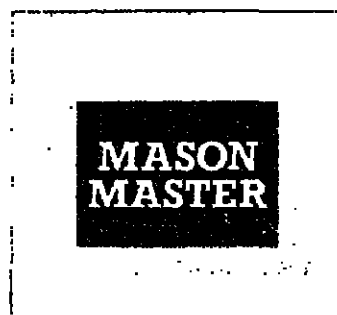
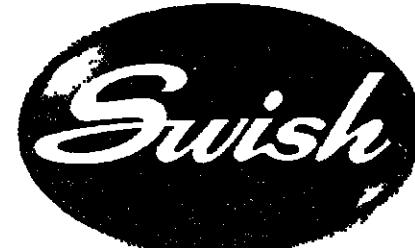
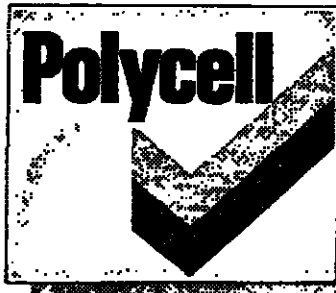
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Competition with Flynn

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B&Q and Texas Homecare are accounting for a third of the goods they sell. Pressure for more on-line sales is long-term, perhaps better. About two-thirds of the goods sold in its grocery store are sold in its grocery store. Own-label goods account for a quarter of sales, but the company has no plans to increase this.

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# Open all hours but never on a Sunday

The controversy over Sunday trading and opening hours is one of those peculiarly British disputes that generate much heat and abuse but little logic. The "traditional British Sunday", when almost everything was closed except the churches and the pubs, is generally considered to be a legacy of Victorian England.

Statutory Sunday observance, however, is a product of the Shops Act 1950, which devotes thousands of words to the subject. The exceptions included "partial exemption orders" which could be granted until 10am for the sale of Sunday newspapers; certain shops in holiday resorts could open for not more than 18 Sundays a year; some markets in the East End of London

DIY stores have borne the brunt of enforcement of Sunday trading curbs, reports

John Young



GED

could carry on trading; and the ban on hairdressing in Scotland could be lifted if the barber was Jewish or was attending a passenger on a ship.

wrong. During the Seventies and Eighties many smaller shops have opened for at least part of Sunday.

Forty years on, the position is chaotic. The all-encompassing provisions of the Shops Act have been eroded to the point where it is now legally permissible to buy gin but not tea, and fresh vegetables but not tinned peas or carrots. Is

the owner of a corner shop expected to examine the contents of a wire basket and inform the would-be purchaser that he will have to return a particular item to the shelf?

David Blackmore, the operations director of the Keep Sunday Special group, insists that the sabbath is traditionally "different" from other days of the week. Shopworkers, he argues, should not be threatened with victimisation if they choose to follow the dictates of their consciences, or to spend Sundays with their families, a view which has received strong support from the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers.

The opposite view is represented by the Shopping Hours Reform Council, which maintains that no harm will be done if shops are simply allowed to open when it suits them, their customers and their employees. It cites the examples of Scotland and the Irish Republic - and, it might be added, most of continental Europe - where no restrictions apply but where, for sound economic reasons, most high street shops and department stores stay shut.

That view was tested on the Sunday before last Christmas, when hundreds of stores defied the law and opened for an extra day's shopping to attract last-minute shoppers.

The general view is that the public's Sunday shopping habits are likely to be largely confined to DIY stores, garden centres, newsagents and small food shops. Last July in the High Court, Mr Justice Hoffman ruled in favour of local authorities in Norwich and Stoke-on-Trent which had insisted on enforcing the law. B&Q had hoped to show that British law was in breach of the Treaty of Rome, but the European Court had by then ruled that it was a matter for British courts.

Earlier this month a private member's bill, promoted by John Marshall, Conservative MP for Hendon South, which would have allowed DIY, motorising and video stores and tourist shops to open on Sundays, was defeated in the Commons. John Major, the prime minister, is said to favour early reform.



Ready for action: do-it-yourself enthusiasts often start a job without determining what tools they will need to buy or hire

## Choosing the tools for the job

Nicole Swengley reports on the first steps for the amateur home improver

WATCHING would-be home improvers steering trolleys loaded with flat packs around do-it-yourself superstores and then trying to cram the packs into a hatchback has become a spectator sport. The way in which they cope reveals much about their likely DIY performance.

One golden rule about DIY is do not start if you think you will not enjoy it. Another is: get the right tools.

Dedicated DIY artists usually have their own comprehensive range of tools. Occasional enthusiasts will need to buy equipment, but it pays to hire expensive, infrequently used gadgets.

Hire shops stock a huge range of tools, from steam wallpaper strippers to mini excavators. Hire outlets are often attached to large DIY stores.

Hire charges vary, so shop around. A week's hire may offer savings on daily rates. You need to show identification, sign a hire agreement and pay a refundable deposit.

Make sure equipment comes with user and safety instructions. A report in the consumer magazine *Which?* pointed to worrying shortcomings involving sub-standard equipment and lack of

safety advice. The magazine suggested that members of Hire Association Europe (HAE) may be more likely to offer advice than non-members.

Equipment worth buying includes drain rods, chainsaws and wallpaper strippers. Regular DIY-ers should also invest in personal dustmasks, eye protection and ear defenders.

According to B&Q, the most popular power tools are cordless screwdrivers, drills, jigsaws and heat paint-strippers. Sainsbury's Homebase reports brisk sales of cordless drills, sanders, traditional

saws and hammers. Texas Homecare notes the increasing popularity of safety-associated products such as smoke detectors, security lights, alarms, door and window locks.

When buying tools, it is important to consider the jobs you will tackle. For example, an electric drill can also power decorating accessories.

Variable speed drills are popular because they can tackle a variety of materials and can also double up as screwdrivers. Cordless electric drills and screwdrivers, driven by rechargeable batteries, are

handy for getting into dangerous or out of the way places where power leads will not reach.

At some stage, DIY-ers will need to strip wallpaper. This can be hard work but a steam wallpaper stripper quickly removes stubborn papers. Heatguns are useful for stripping oil-based paints (gloss, eggshell and varnish) from wooden surfaces.

Preparing surfaces before varnishing or painting is made easier with a power sander. Orbital sanders are useful for smoothing and final finishing, while belt sanders take off larger amounts of material, for example, when levelling a surface or floor. Many sanders remove the dust created with built-in dustbags, while others can be attached to a vacuum cleaner.

Time-saving angle grinders cut bricks, paving slabs, roof tiles, walls, shelving uprights and metal piping as well as sharpening garden tools or removing bolt heads.

For DIY-ers who need to cut curves in wood, metal or plastic, a jigsaw is ideal. This uses a short blade with an up-and-down motion, cutting on the up stroke, and can cut straight lines either vertically or at an angle.

- Plan work carefully and realistically. Decide how long it will take and how much it will cost.
- Start by tackling either the most urgent task, or the one that you can best afford to complete properly.
- Make a scale drawing to give you a picture to work from.
- Always use good quality materials and never do a stop-gap job.
- Read equipment hire agreements carefully before signing.
- Decide whether you want to take advantage of any insurance deals offered in case the equipment is damaged or stolen.
- Make sure the equipment is complete before you take it away.
- Ask for a demonstration of equipment.
- Find out if large hire equipment can be delivered.
- Do not start unless you are going to enjoy it.

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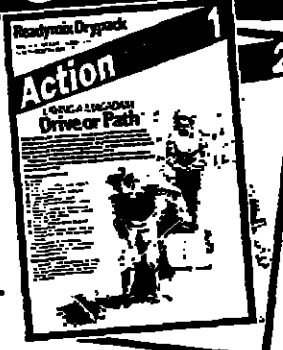
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## How to lead customers down the aisle

Rodney Hobson sees how buyers are guided to the goods

To the customer, a DIY superstore looks like an aircraft hanger with goods of varying shapes dumped casually around. In fact, the layout is a triumph of common sense over volume.

Stuart Burrell, the DIY adviser in the marketing department of Wickes, says that because of its origins as a supplier to the trade, his company has had to reconsider its policy on layout in recent years.

Although half of Wickes's business is still with the trade, every new store or conversion draws a balance between the needs of trade customers and seeing that home-improvers can find what they want.

At the door a large display lists what is in each aisle. Every aisle has a number and a symbol showing the type of product found there. A three-pin plug, for example, denotes electrical goods. The great range of sizes and weights among DIY goods imposes a layout different from that of a food supermarket.

Aisles have to be about 8ft wide to allow two big trolleys to pass. This also makes the store look more spacious and brighter, overcoming the problem of shelves that are high and seem to tower over the customer.

Safety is another consideration. Goods must be within reach, so they cannot be stacked too high. Heavy goods must be at about stomach height for easy lifting on to the trolley. Product manufacturers are also playing a role in improving store displays. Paul Barrow, the marketing director at Ronseal, says: "To ensure that they retain consumer interest, DIY outlets must spend on adequate display material and consumer information. Increasingly, manufacturers are playing a bigger role in this area."

Initiatives include clear vertical divisions between different product categories and uses, and providing leaflets and other information for display.

Stores are turning to computer experts to help with planning. B&Q, for example, last year placed a £67,000 order for a computer-aided

design system. Manufacturers can also advise on shelf plans within the store that the retailer decides to allow to a range of products. For example, some stores allocate a stand to each manufacturer.

Mr Barrow says: "The consumer has a job to do and wants to see what choices there are. Multiples, with 56

per cent of DIY sales, are continuing to gain a share of the main areas.

"As this trend continues, information on packs, material at point of purchase and the layout of products on shelves will become increasingly important as the means of communicating with consumers and influencing the

choice of product. We are very close to the consumer," Mr Barrow believes in providing adequate information for the consumer. He says: "The DIY customer is an avid reader of the back of the packet because there are not enough leaflets to guide him. It can be quite a confusing market, especially when the customer may come in only once a year. It is important to give him confidence."



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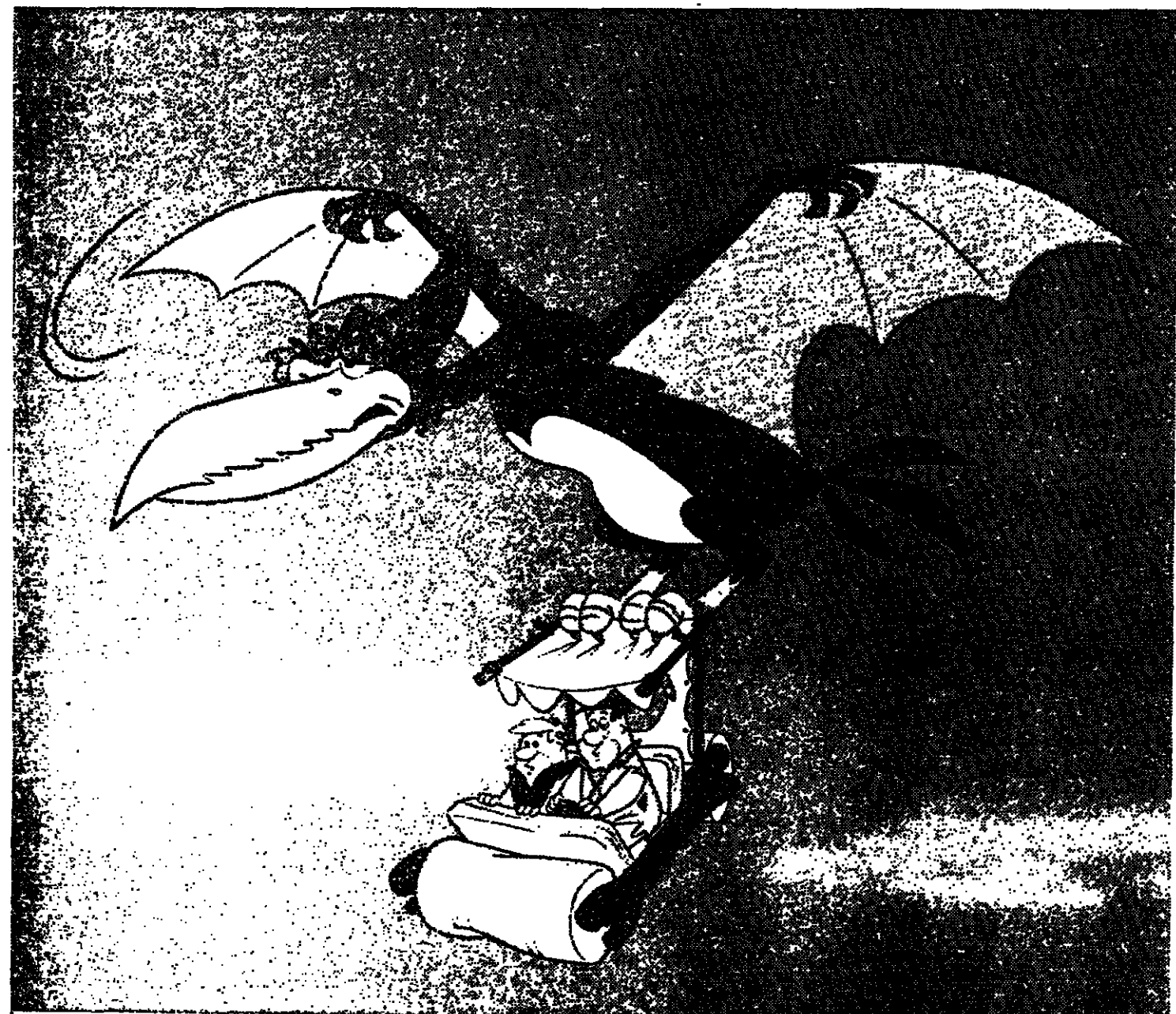
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